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ENGLAND



ST. PAUL'S FROM THE RIVER THAMES

ENGLAND

BY

FRANK FOX

AUTHOR OF "RAMPARTS OF EMPIRE"

"PEEPS AT THE BRITISH EMPIRE," "AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA"

WITH 32 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

LONDON

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1914

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

To bring within the limits of one volume any detailed description of England—her history, people, landscapes, cities—would be impossible. I have sought in this book to give an impression of some of the most “English” features of the land, devoting a little space first to an attempt to explain the origins of the English people. Thus the English fields and flowers and trees, the English homes and schools are given far more attention than English cities, English manufactures; for they are more peculiar to the land and the people. More markedly than in any superiority of her material greatness England stands apart from the rest of the world as the land of green trees and meadows, the land of noble schools and of sweet homes :

ENGLAND

Green fields of England ! wheresoe'er
Across this watery waste we fare,
One image at our hearts we bear,
Green fields of England, everywhere.

Sweet eyes in England, I must flee
Past where the waves' last confines be,
Ere your loved smile I cease to see,
Sweet eyes in England, dear to me !

Dear home in England, safe and fast,
If but in thee my lot lie cast,
The past shall seem a nothing past
To thee, dear home, if won at last ;
Dear Home in England, won at last.

That is the cry of an Englishman (Arthur Hugh Clough). On the same note—the green fields, the dear homes—a sympathetic visitor to England would shape his impressions on going away.

If, by chance, the reading of this book should whet the appetite for more about England, or some particular part of the kingdom, there are available in the same series very many volumes on different counties and different features of England. To these I would refer the lover or student of England wishing for closer details.

My impression is necessarily a general one; and it is that of a visitor from one of the overseas Dominions—not the less interesting, I hope, certainly not the less sympathetic for that reason.

FRANK FOX.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
THE MAKING OF ENGLAND — THE BRITONS AND THE ROMANS	1

CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF ENGLAND—THE ANGLO-SAXONS AND THE NORMANS	16
---	----

CHAPTER III

THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE AND THE ENGLISH LOVE OF IT .	28
--	----

CHAPTER IV

THE TRAINING OF YOUNG ENGLAND	43
---	----

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND AT WORK	64
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI

ENGLAND AT PLAY	81
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII

	PAGE
THE CITIES OF ENGLAND	101

CHAPTER VIII

THE RIVERS OF ENGLAND	114
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX

ENGLAND'S SHRINES	125
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X

THE POORER POPULATION	137
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI

THE ARTS IN ENGLAND	155
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII

POLITICAL LIFE IN ENGLAND	171
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEFENCE OF ENGLAND	187
----------------------------------	-----

INDEX	203
-----------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. St. Paul's from the River Thames	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
2. The Chalk Cliffs of England	1
3. North Side, Canterbury Cathedral	8
4. Richmond, Yorkshire	17
5. Norman Staircase, King's School, Canterbury	24
6. A Kent Manor-House and Garden	33
7. A Sussex Village	40
8. The Bridge of Sighs, St. John's College, Cambridge	49
9. St. Magdalen Tower and College, Oxford	56
10. Broad Street, Oxford, looking West	59
11. Eton Upper School	62
12. Houses of Parliament and Westminster Bridge, London	65
13. Harvesting in Herefordshire	72
14. Football at Rugby School	81
15. Cricket at "Lord's"	88
16. Trout-fishing on the Itchen, Hampshire	97
17. Dean's Yard, Westminster	104
18. Sailing Boats on the Serpentine, Hyde Park, London	107

19. Watergate Street, Chester	110
20. The River Rother, Sussex	115
21. Thames at Richmond, Surrey	118
22. Spring by the Thames	121
23. Windsor Castle from Fellows' Eyot: Early Spring	124
24. Glastonbury Abbey, Somersetshire	128
25. Anne Hathaway's Cottage near Stratford-on-Avon	137
26. Gipsies on a Gloucestershire Common	144
27. The Tower from the Tower Bridge, looking West	153
28. Westminster Abbey from the end of the Embank- ment	160
29. Westminster and the Houses of Parliament	169
30. Hyde Park, London	176
31. Battleships Manœuvring	193
32. Changing the Guard	200



THE CHALK CLIFFS OF ENGLAND - THE NEEDLES, ISLE OF WIGHT

ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE MAKING OF ENGLAND—THE BRITONS AND THE ROMANS

WHEN Europe, as it shows on the map to-day, was in the making, some great force of Nature cut the British Islands off from the mainland. Perhaps it was the result of a convulsive spasm as Mother Earth took a new wrinkle on her face. Perhaps it was the steady biting of the Gulf Stream eating away at chalk cliffs and shingle beds. Whatever the cause, as far back as man knows the English Channel ran between the mainland of Europe and “a group of islands off the coast of France”; and the chalk cliffs of the greatest of these islands faced the new-comer to suggest to the Romans the name of *Terra Alba* : perhaps to prompt in some admirer

of Horace among them a prophetic fancy that this white land was to make a "white mark" in the Calendar of History.

Considered geographically, the British Islands, taking the sum of the whole five thousand or so of them (counting islets), are of slight importance. Yet a map of the world showing the possessions of Great Britain—the area over which the people of these islands have spread their sway—shows a whole continent, large areas of three other continents, and numberless islands to be British. And when the astonishing disproportion between the British Islands and the British Empire has been grasped, it can be made the more astonishing by reducing the British Islands down to England as the actual centre from which all this greatness has radiated. It is true that the British Empire is the work of the British people: as the Roman Empire was of the Italian people and not of Rome alone. But it was in England that it had its foundation; and the English people made a start with the British Empire by subduing or coaxing to their domain the Welsh, the Scottish, and the Irish. Not to England all the glory: but certainly to England the first glory.

There is at this day a justified resentment shown by Scots and Irish, not to speak of Welshmen, when "England" is used as a term to embrace the whole of the British Isles. (Similarly Canadians resent the term "America" being arrogated by the United States.) A French wit has put very neatly the case for that resentment by stating that ordinarily an inhabitant of the British Isles is a British citizen until he does something disgraceful, when he is identified in the English newspapers as a "Scottish murderer" or an "Irish thief": but if he does something fine then he is "a gallant Englishman." That is neat satire, founded on a slight foundation of truth. Very often "England" is confounded with "Great Britain" when there is discussion of Imperial greatness. I do not want to come under suspicion of inexactness, which that confusion of terms shows. But writing of England, and England alone, it is just to claim at the outset that the actual first beginning of that great British power which has eclipsed all records of the world was in England: and it is worth the while to inquire into the causes which made for the growth of that power. It is necessary, indeed, to make that inquiry

and get to know something of English history before attempting to look with an understanding eye upon English landscapes, English cities, and the English people of to-day. The classic painters of the greatest age of Art used landscape only as the background for portraiture. The human interest to them was always paramount. And, whether one may or may not go the whole way with these painters in the appraisement of the relative value of the human or the natural, clear it is that a human interest heightens the value of every scene; and there can be no full appreciation of a country without a knowledge of its history.

“When a noble act is done—perchance in a scene of great natural beauty: when Leonidas and his three hundred martyrs consume one day in dying, and the sun and the moon come each and look upon them once in the steep defile of Thermopylæ: when Arnold Winkelried, in the high Alps, under the shadow of the avalanche, gathers in his side a sheaf of Austrian spears to break the line for his comrades; are not these heroes entitled to add the beauty of the scene to the beauty of the deed?” Assuredly “yes” to that question from Emerson, and assuredly,

too, they pay back every day what they have borrowed, giving to a noble landscape the added charm of its human association with a noble deed. The white cliffs of England are beautiful and impressive as they show like gleaming ramparts defending green fields and fruitful valleys. But they become more beautiful and more impressive as one thinks of them confronting the Romans stepping from Gaul to a wider conquest ; or facing William of Normandy as he set out to enforce a weak claim with a strong sword ; or set like white defiant teeth at the great ships of the Spanish Armada as they passed up the English Channel with Drake in pursuit, the unwieldy Spanish galleons showing like bulls pursued by gadflies.

Let us then look for a moment at England in the making before considering the England of to-day.

When the British Isles were cut off from the mainland, England was, without doubt, inhabited by people akin to the Gauls. The people of the French province of Brittany are to-day very clearly cousins of the people of those districts of England, such as Cornwall, which preserve most of the old Briton blood. Separation from the mainland does not seem to have

effected very much change in the national type by the time that history came on the scene to make her records. Cæsar found the Britons very like the Gauls. They had not developed into a maritime people. Fisheries they had, for food and for pearls ; but they had none of the piratical adventurousness of the Norsemen. That they were naked, woad-painted savages, those Britons of Cæsar's time, has been held long as a popular belief. But that is hardly tenable in the light of the knowledge which recent archæological investigation has given, though, likely enough, they painted for battle, as soldiers of a later time used to wear plumes and glittering uniforms to impress and frighten the enemy.

Excavations in more than one district of late have shown that the early Britons possessed a good share of civilisation before ever the Romans came to their land. Thus near Northampton there is a place which used to be a camp of the Britons prior to the Roman occupation. The camp has an area of about four acres, and was defended by a ditch fifteen feet deep, and about thirty feet wide, with a rampart on either side of the fosse.

Here were discovered the bases of what are

considered to have been the remains of the hutch-dwellings of the occupiers of the camp. Of these some three hundred were found filled with black earth and mould, and from them many most interesting articles were obtained. There were many iron relics, such as swords, daggers, spear heads, knives, saws, sickles, adzes, an axe, plough-shares, nails, chisels, gouges, bridles (one with a bronze centre-bit), and a well-formed pot-hook made of twisted iron. In bronze there were remains of two sword scabbards, four brooches, some fragments belonging to horse harness, pins and rings, and a small spoon. There were also glass beads and rings, a fragment of jet, a number of spindle whorls for spinning, bone combs used in weaving, and about twenty triangular-shaped bricks pierced through each corner, considered to be loom weights to keep the warp taut ; more than a hundred querns or millstones, some of the corn which was ground in them (this fortunately happened to be charred and so preserved), and remains of about four hundred pots, nearly all used for domestic purposes. One of the bronze scabbards bears on the top an engraved pattern of the decorative art of the period, showing the Triskele, a sun symbol often found on

remains of the Bronze Age in Denmark as well as elsewhere.

Similar pre-Roman relics have been obtained from the Marsh Village near Glastonbury, from Mount Coburn near Lewes, and from near Canterbury. The unmistakable evidence of these relics is that the pre-Roman Briton could spin and weave, knew how to plough and when to sow, was an excellent carpenter, and was an expert in metal work, both in iron and bronze, and possessed a decorative art. He was therefore not a "savage" as savages were understood in those days.

We must consider the Britons, then, of Cæsar's time as possessed of some degree of civilisation. They understood fabrics, pottery, metals, architecture. They had come into contact with the civilisation of the Mediterranean Sea long before his day. The Scilly Islands off the coast of Cornwall can reasonably be identified as the Casserterrides of the Phœnicians, where the merchants of Tyre and Sidon bought tin, giving cloth in exchange. It is said, indeed, that an ingot of tin with a Phœnician mark upon it was dredged up once from Falmouth Harbour. Probably the very earliest mention of Britain



NORTH SIDE, CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

is by Hecataeus (B.C. 500, about the time when Marathon was fought). He described Britain then as an isle of the Hyperboreans, and alleged that the inhabitants "raised two crops in the year and worshipped the sun."

That may be the first original sneer at the British climate, the sneer which now takes the form that whenever the sun appears in England it is photographed, lest the inhabitants of the island should forget what it is like. (There is an Australian "drought" story of the same order of humorous exaggeration, that in a certain district the rain from heaven had been withheld so long, and grass had so long disappeared, that when at last relief came and the grass grew the sheep would not eat it, as they did not recognise what it was!) But perhaps Hecataeus was serious. It is not at all unlikely that the gossip Hecataeus had of the Isle of the Hyperboreans came from Phœnician sources, and referred to that south-westerly extremity of Cornwall which gets the full benefit of the warm Gulf Stream, and has in consequence an astonishingly mild climate for its latitude, a climate quite capable of producing sometimes two crops a year.

As for sun worship, there are many indications

of the practice of its rites in prehistoric Britain. The "Round Towers" which are sprinkled over Ireland can best be explained by a theory of sun worship. Stonehenge, in the south of England, which dates back to about 1500 years B.C., was probably a temple of sun worship. There are the ruins of a temple, possibly of the sun, at Avebury (Wilts.) of even older date.

It would be impossible to attempt even to hint at all the evidence in the matter. But what may be accepted quite safely as a fact is, that in prehistoric times the Briton was no laggard in the path of civilisation: that indeed he was among the early pilgrims on that path. Even as far north as the Yorkshire Wolds—it is clear from recent excavations—there was a thick local population of men in the Neolithic Age. The burial mounds of these Neolithic tribes have lately been excavated, and have given much valuable evidence as to the history of Man. The "Ipswich Man," too—the indubitable remains of a man who walked upright and who had skull accommodation for a human brain, discovered in strata of a most remote age of the earth—proves that in the little corner of the world which was to have such a wonderful

history in the far future, there were early indications of promise.

It is worth while to clear our British ancestors of the reproach of being woad-painted savages at a time of the world's history when every European, almost, had learned at least the use of skins. For those Britons were responsible for that "Celtic fringe" which to-day shows so largely in our poetry and our politics, and in other walks of life. The ancient Briton enters into the making of modern England through the strong traces of his ancestry left in Cornwall, Devon, the Marches of Wales, and elsewhere.

But respectably clothed, arm-bearing, house-building personage as he was, the ancient Briton would never have made a very great mark in the world if he had been left to himself. He would never have overflowed to send out tidal waves of conquest like the Norsemen or the Goths. Possibly even in those early days he had his Celtic qualities of poetry and imagination and argumentativeness, and spent much of his energy in dreaming things instead of doing things. It was when the Romans came that England began to shape towards a big place in the world.

The Romans do not seem to have had a very

bloody campaign in subduing that part of Britain which is now England. The people were rather softer than the Gauls of the mainland. Their country was penetrated by several rivers such as the Thames, which gave easy highways to the Roman galleys. The gentle contours of the country made easy the building of the Roman roads, which were the chief agents of Roman civilisation. But the Roman dominion in the British Islands stopped with England. Scotland, Wales, Ireland remained unsubdued. That fact was to have an important bearing on the future of England. Step by step, Fate was working for the making of the people who were to cover the whole earth with their dominions.

We have seen that in the beginning Britain was a part of Gaul, a temperate and fertile peninsula which by right of latitude should have had the temperature of Labrador, but which, because of the Gulf Stream, enjoyed a climate singularly mild and promotive of fertility. When the separation from the mainland came because of the cutting of the English Channel, the Gallic tribes left in Britain began to acquire, as the fruits of their soft environment and their insular position, an exclusive patriotism and a com-

parative immunity from invasion. These made the Briton at once very proud of his country and not very fitted to defend its shores.

With the Roman invasion the future English race won a benefit from both those causes. The comparative ease of the conquest by the Roman Power freed the ensuing settlement by the conquerors from a good deal of the bitterness which would have followed a desperate resistance. The Romans were generous winners and good colonists. Once their power was established firmly, they treated a subject race with kindly consideration. Soon, too, the local pride of the Britons affected their victors. The Roman garrison came to take an interest in their new home, an interest which was aided by the singular beauty and fertility of the country. It was not long before Carausius, a Roman general in Britain, had set himself up as independent of Italy, and with the aid of sea-power he maintained his position for some years. The Romans and the Britons, too, freely intermarried, and at the time when the failing power of the Empire compelled the withdrawal of the Roman garrison, the south of Britain was as much Romanised as, say, northern Africa or Spain. All the appur-

tenances of Roman civilisation had been brought to Britain. It was no mere barbarous province. It had its great watering-places such as Bath, and its fine cities and its vineyards, though the British climate nowadays is accused of not being able to grow grapes. British oysters, too, were famous among the gluttons of Rome, and one Roman emperor is said to have raised a British oyster to the rank of consul as a mark of his appreciation. (This jest of the table, if all stories can be credited, has since been repeated in England, and is responsible for the "Sir Loin" of beef and also the "Baron" of beef.)

But side by side with the growth of a gracious civilisation in England, there was constant warfare on the borders. The wilder natives of the British islands refused the Roman sway, and threatened by their forays the security of the new cities. This made necessary a great military organisation, which has left its mark on the England of to-day in the Roman roads and the sites of Roman military camps dotted all over the country from the Thames to the Tweed. The remains of these camps are quite distinguishable in many places; and generally they are known as "Cæsar's camps," whether Julius

Cæsar ever saw their neighbourhood or not. Probably Carausius was the “Cæsar” of many of these camps.

Despite the border wars the Romanised Britons got on fairly comfortably until the failing power of the Roman Empire made it necessary for the Roman legions to withdraw to Italy. This left Romanised Britain to be attacked by the wilder Britons of the north and the west. That these attacks should have been as successful as they were, hints that the south Briton of England was rather a soft fellow. Since, as we will find later, the Anglo-Saxon—once comfortably settled in England—showed a tendency also to become a soft fellow, and had to be pricked to greatness by the Dane and the Norman, it would almost seem that this gentle, green, cloudy England has ultimately a softening effect on its inhabitants. But fresh blood pours in to bring vigour. England invites adventurers by her beauty and then tames them. Because of her perpetual invitation the British nation has been made of a brew of Briton, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Norman bloods, and all these people have left their mark on the landscape of the country.

CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF ENGLAND—THE ANGLO-SAXONS AND THE NORMANS

How the Romanised Briton of England would have fared ultimately in his contest with the more savage Britons of the north and the west, who came to rob him down to his toga, if they had been left to fight it out, it is hard to say. Probably the course of events would have been that the English natives would first have yielded to the northern invaders, and afterwards absorbed them and made them partakers in their civilisation.

But the issue was never fought out. There had begun the most momentous swarming of a human race that history records. Along the Scandinavian and the Danish peninsulas, and the northern coast of Germany, there had been swelling up a vast population of fierce, strong,



RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE

A town of considerable importance at the time of the Norman Conquest

courageous and hungry men; Angles, Saxons, Danes, Jutes, Norsemen—they were all very much akin: big blue-eyed men of mighty daring mated with fair, chaste, fruitful women; and they swarmed out of their warrens to overrun the greater part of Europe. You may trace them to the interior of Russia, to Iceland, to Constantinople, some think to North America. But, whatever their path, the British Islands were athwart the track they took, and the British Islands received the most complete flood of Anglo-Saxon blood. Again it was England that made way most easily to the invader. The Anglo-Saxons came and cleared out the Romanised and Christian civilisation from Yorkshire to Kent. But the fiercer British natives who had held back the Romans, held back also these new invaders, helped thereto by the fact that their lands seemed to be hungry, and to offer but little booty. England, fat, fertile, like a beautiful park with its forests and meadows and rivers, was at once a richer and an easier prize.

The Anglo-Saxon probably made his conquest more easy by treachery and by fomenting discord among the Britons. There is a ballad by Thomas Love Peacock, which treats of such

an Anglo-Saxon victory—with at least a shadow of a shade of historical warrant :—

“Come to the feast of wine and meat,”
Spake the dark dweller of the sea.
“There shall the hours in mirth proceed ;
There neither sword nor shield shall be.”

None but the noblest of the land,
The flower of Britain’s chiefs were there ;
Unarmed, amid the Saxon band
They sate, the fatal feast to share.

Three hundred chiefs, three score and three
Went, where the festal torches burned
Before the dweller of the sea ;
They went, and three alone returned.

Till dawn the pale sweet mead they quaffed,
The ocean chief unclosed his vest,
His hand was on his dagger’s haft,
And daggers glared at every breast.

Still it was an easy victory, that of Anglo-Saxon over Briton. But just as we must, in the light of recent knowledge, give up the idea that the Briton whom Julius Cæsar encountered was a woad-painted savage, so we must refuse to accept the impression (which is implied more often than directly stated) that the Romanised Briton, after the departure of the Roman legions, was quite helpless. Between the Roman de-

parture from Britain and the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms there, room must be found, somehow, for whatever of historical truth there is as a foundation for the Arthurian legends. On that point let old Caxton speak :—

Now it is notoriously known through the universal world that there be nine worthy and the best that ever were. That is to wit three paynims, three Jews, and three Christian men. As for the paynims they were tofore the Incarnation of Christ, which were named, the first Hector of Troy, of whom the history is come both in ballad and in prose ; the second Alexander the Great ; and the third Julius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, of whom the histories be well-known and had.

And as for the three Jews which also were tofore the Incarnation of our Lord, of whom the first was Duke Joshua which brought the children of Israel into the land of behest ; the second David, King of Jerusalem ; and the third Judas Maccabæus ; of these three the Bible rehearseth all their noble histories and acts.

And sith the said Incarnation have been three noble Christian men stalled and admitted through the universal world into the number of the nine best and worthy, of whom was first the noble Arthur, whose noble acts I purpose to write in this present book here following. The second was Charlemagne or Charles the Great, of whom the history is had in many places both in French and English ; and the third and last was Godfrey of Bouillon, of whose acts and life I made a book unto the excellent prince and king of noble memory, King Edward the Fourth. The said noble gentleman instantly

required me to imprint the history of the said noble king and conqueror, King Arthur, and of his knights, with the history of the Sangreal, and of the death and ending of the said Arthur; affirming that I ought rather to imprint his acts and noble feats, than of Godfrey of Bouillon, or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man born within this realm, and king and emperor of the same; and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his acts, and also of his knights.

To whom I answered, that divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him be but feigned and fables, by cause that some chronicles make of him no mention nor remember him no thing, nor of his knights. Whereunto they answered, and one in special said, that in him that should say or think that there was never such a king called Arthur, might well be credited great folly and blindness; for he said that there were many evidences of the contrary: first ye may see his sepulture in the Monastery of Glastonbury. And also in *Polichronicon*, in the fifth book of the sixth chapter, and in the seventh book and the twenty-third chapter, where his body was buried and after found and translated into the said monastery. Ye shall see also in the history of Bochas, in his book *De Casu Principum*, part of his noble acts, and also of his fall.

Also Galfridus in his British book recounteth his life; and in divers places of England many remembrances be yet of him and shall remain perpetually, and also of his knights. First in the Abbey of Westminster, at Saint Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax closed in beryl, in which is written *Patricius Arthurus, Britannæ, Gallie, Germanie, Dacie, Imperator*.

Item in the castle of Dover ye may see Gawaine's skull and Craddock's mantle, at Winchester the Round Table, in other places Launcelot's sword and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no man reasonably gainsay but there was a king of this land named Arthur. For in all places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthy, and the first of the three Christian men. And also he is more spoken of beyond the sea, more books made of his noble acts than there be in England, as well in Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and Greek, as in French. And yet of record remain in witness of him in Wales, in the town of Camelot, the great stones and marvellous works of iron, lying under the ground, and royal vaults, which divers now living hath seen.

I fear one cannot take Caxton's endorsement of Sir Thomas Malory as final evidence, and accept as historic a King Arthur who on one occasion invaded the European Continent and defeated in battle the troops of the Roman Emperor. But there were men to fight in England after the Romans left; and those beaten in the fight fell back on Scotland, on Wales, on Cornwall, and some of them wandered farther afield and colonised Brittany in France, a province which to-day reminds of Cornwall at a thousand points.

The Anglo-Saxons, like other nations, found the air of England civilising. They aspired to settle down in quiet comfort when there came

from the east a fresh cloud of freebooters, the Danes, to claim a share in this delectable island. Dane and Saxon fought it out—the Briton from “the Celtic fringe” occasionally interfering—with all the hearty ill-will of blood relations, and as they fought shaped out a very good people, partly English, partly Saxon, partly Danish, and in the mountains partly British.

If you look over England with a seeing eye, you can notice the traces of each element in the nation’s blood; and the landscape will partly explain why in one place there is a Celtic predominance, in another a Danish. Each national type sought and held the districts most suitable to its character.

After the Danish, the last great element in the making of the British race was the Norman. The Normans were not so much aliens as might be supposed. The Anglo-Saxons of the day were descendants of sea-pirates who had settled in Britain and mingled their blood with the British. The Normans were descendants of kindred sea-pirates who had settled in Gaul, and mingled their blood with that of the Gauls and Franks. The two races, Anglo-Saxon and Normans, after a while merged amicably enough,

the Anglo-Saxon blood predominating, and the present British type was evolved, in part Celtic, in part Danish, in part Anglo-Saxon, in part Norman—a hard-fighting, stubborn, adventurous type, which in its making from such varied elements had learned the value of compromise, and of the common-sense principle of give-and-take.

The Normans brought to England a higher knowledge of the arts than the Anglo-Saxons had. The Roman culture of Britain had been just as high as the Roman culture of Gaul. But in Britain its tradition had been lost to a great extent in the onrush of the rude, unlettered Anglo-Saxons. In Gaul the Norsemen had won only a district, not the whole country, and they had been surrounded by civilising influences and had reacted to them wonderfully. Practically all the fine buildings of England date from after the Norman Epoch. But it is a fact which will strike at once the student of those buildings, who afterwards compares them with contemporary Norman buildings in France, that Norman architecture was not transplanted to England. Whilst at Rouen, Lisieux, Caen, Bayeux, you see the churches usually in Flamboyant or

Ogival Gothic ; in England the churches of about the same date are in a more severe and straight-laced style. It is well worth the trouble to study somewhat closely the churches built by the Normans in France and by the Norman-English in England during the century after the Conquest. A clear indication will be found from the study that the Normans did not overrun and beat down the Anglo-Saxons ; but that the Anglo-Saxon was the “ predominant partner ” almost from the first in the domestic economy of the nation, however badly he fared in the tented field against the Normans.

The antiquities of England, the edifices of England, the very fields of England will be understood better if they are looked at in the light of English history—not that bare-bones caricature of history which is a mere record of battles and kings, but the living history which traces to their sources the streams of our race. The England of to-day is beginning to know the wisdom of a close sympathetic study of the past. One of the signs of this awakening of the historical sense is the popularity of the open-air pageant reviving scenes of old. I shall always remember, among many of those pageants, a particularly



NORMAN STAIRCASE, KING'S SCHOOL, CANTERBURY

fine one at Chester, a city of great historic importance.

Such brilliant sunshine as rarely glows over "green and cloudy England" greeted this Chester Pageant; and, with it, just enough of a gentle breeze as to set all the leaves to a morris dance and to give to banner and mantle a flowing line. The scene for the play was set by Nature, or by good gardeners of long ago working in close sympathy with her model for an English pleasaunce. It was a very dainty sward, perhaps of five acres in all, ringed around with trees and bushes in their native wildness, which invaded here and there the grass with an out-thrown clump or extended arm. On such a spot fairies would pitch for their revels, noticing how the curtains of the shrubberies would mask their troopings, and the extending wings of boscage give surprise to their exits and entrances. With perfect weather and a perfect stage, the Chester Pageant needed to claim a large excellence to prove itself worthy of its opportunity; and did make and fully establish the claim.

It was] bright, graced with fine music and much dainty dancing, engrossing in its story, and amusing in the little character sketches of

life with which it embroidered history. Also it taught patriotism by impressing proud facts of history. Where, to serve the purpose of the picturesque, the probable rather than the certain was followed, due warning was given; and the wise plan was adopted of interspersing with the great incidents pages from the familiar life of the people. The Crusade was preached from Chester Cross; side by side with it was shown an excerpt from cottage life in the story of Dickon, an archer, and his betrothed, Alison, whom he would leave, and yet not leave, to take the badge of the Crusade. History was, in fact, made homely, as history should be if it is to claim interest outside the philosopher's study.

Chester is very proud of its history and jealously preserves its antiquities. A city which was a great camp for the Romans, a naval headquarters for the Saxons, a centre for the fierce contests between Normans and Welsh, a much-disputed prize in the Civil War, has certainly much history to cherish, and Chester nobly indulges the pride. No other city of England, not even excepting London, shows so much reverence for a glorious past.

But all through England there is an awakening

of historical interest; and it marches on the right lines to make history not so much a record of dead people as an explanation of living people.

After this short glance at the past let us look to the England of to-day.

CHAPTER III

THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE AND THE ENGLISH LOVE OF IT

THERE are as many types of natural scenery in England almost as there are counties. To attempt to describe all in this one volume would be absurd. Yet to generalise on English natural beauty is difficult, because of that great diversity. Who can suggest, for instance, a common denominator to suit the Devonshire Moors, the Norfolk Broads, the Surrey Downs, and the Thames Valley? But since one must generalise, it is safe to give as the predominant feature of England's natural beauty that which strikes most obviously the eye of the stranger used to other countries.

Nine out of ten strangers coming to England for the first time, and asked to speak of its appearance, will say something equivalent to

“ park-like.” England in truth looks like one great well-ordered park, under the charge of a skilful landscape gardener. The trees seem to grow with an eye to effect, the meadows to be designed for vistas, the hedges for reliefs. The land indeed does not seem ever to be doing anything—not at all a correct impression in fact, that, but it is the one conveyed irresistibly.

One soon notices that the tree must in France work for its living. It cannot aspire to the luxurious and beautiful existence of its English brothers, who in their woods and copses have little to do but to “ utter green leaves joyously ” in the spring, glow with burnished glory in the autumn, and unrobe delicate traceries for admiration in the winter. In France a tree may live on the edge of a road or as one of a cluster sheltering a farmhouse, or keep many other trees company in a State pine forest which will help to make those execrable French matches; but its every twig is utilised, and a hard-working existence takes away much of its beauty. The æsthetic tree, the tree with nothing to do but just to be a tree and look pretty, is rare in most countries; but in England it is the commonplace. Other countries have useful trees which

look pretty, forests which are impressive in spite of man. England seems to share with Japan the amiable thriftlessness of giving up much land to growth which is not intended to serve any base utilitarian purpose at all.

The hedges, which take up a considerable fraction of English arable soil, help to the park-like appearance of the country. They are inexpressibly beautiful when spring wakes them up to pipe their roulades in tender green. In summer they are splendid in blazon of leaf and flower. In autumn they flaunt banners of gold and red and brown. In winter, too, they are still beautiful, especially in the early winter when there still survive a few scarlet berries to glow and crackle and almost burn in the frost. If England, in a mood of thrift, swept away her hedges and put in their places fences (or that nice sense of keeping boundaries which enables the French cultivator to do without either), the saving of land would be enormous. But much of the park-like beauty of the country-side would depart; and with it the predominant note of the English landscape, which is that of the estate of a rich, careful, orderly nobleman.

The change will be slow in coming, if it comes

at all; for though he would be the last man, probably, to suspect it, the Englishman is at heart æsthetic. Yes, in spite of horse-hair furniture, gilt-framed oleographs, wax-flower decorations, and Early Victorian wall-papers, and other sins of which many of him have been, and still are, guilty, the Englishman has planted in him an instinct for art. It shows in his love of nature, of the green of his England. Almost every one aspires to come into touch with a bit of plant life. In the East End of London the aspiration takes the form of a window garden. You may see workingmen's "flats" let at six shillings a week with their window gardens. In the West End, land which must be worth many thousands of pounds per acre is devoted to garden use. For want of better, a terrace of houses will have a little strip of plantation, at back or front, common to all of them. House and "flat" agents tell that tenants almost always demand that there shall be at least sight of a green tree from some window. In the small suburban villas a very considerable tax of money and labour is cheerfully paid in the effort to keep in good order a little pocket-handkerchief of lawn and a few shrubs. This love of the garden

is holy and wholesome, and it proves, I think, that the Englishman is at heart a lover of the beautiful, an "æsthetic," though he is supposed to be such a dull, prosaic, practical person.

Comparing the English with the French on this point, in my opinion it is in the practical application of æsthetic principles to life rather than in æsthetic sensibility that the French are superior to the English. What difference there is in æstheticism favours the English; there are deeper springs of art and poetry in the English people than in the French. But art has been far more carefully cherished and organised in France than in England. There is more general artistic education, if less true artistic feeling.

Approach a typical French village of a modern type. The first impression given by the houses is of a vastly superior artistic consciousness. Both in colour and in form the houses are more beautiful than the same types in England, where domestic architecture of the villa type so often suggests either a penal establishment or the need of a penal establishment for the designer. But look a little closer, and one notices that, as compared with an English town, there is in France a conspicuous absence of gardens. Decorative



A KENT MANOR-HOUSE AND GARDEN

trees, shrubberies, flowers are rare. Where there is garden space it is, as like as not, devoted to some shocking attempt at grandiose *rococo* work. The interiors, too, are disappointing. Thrift suggests the hideous closed-in stove as a substitute for open fires ; but the garish wall-papers, the coloured prints, the “decorations” of shell-work or china, and so on, are not necessary, and are far more ugly than those of the average poor home in England, even of the “Early Victorian type.” I repeat, the natural artistic standard of the French does not seem to be so high as that of the English, but the standard of artistic education is very much higher.

I have noticed among all classes in England the same natural love of beauty. It does not exist only in the rich (but as a class it exists among them to a very marked degree : there is nothing in the world more beautiful than an English manor house, with its park and garden) ; it permeates the whole people. I recall a farmer to whom I spoke of the waste caused by the gorgeous yellow-blossomed weeds which invaded his wheat. “Yes,” he said, half content, half sorry, “but they do look so beautiful.” It was not that he was a lazy farmer, but he did actually

love the beautiful wild life which came to rob his wheat of its nourishment.

At another time I remember meeting on a country road a draper's porter (one of those poor casual labourers who make an odd penny here and there by carrying parcels for small drapers). He had an enforced holiday and he was tramping out into the country from the town "to see the green fields." He did not say in so many words that he "loved" the green fields. It would not occur to him probably to attempt to phrase his feeling towards them. But it was clear that he did, most fondly; and he was fairly typical of the Englishman of his class.

As an exile the Englishman carries away with him the ideal of the soft green English countryside, and tries to reconstruct England wherever he may settle overseas. English trees, English grass, English flowers he sedulously cultivates in Australia, in Canada, in South Africa, and wins some strange triumphs over Nature in many of his acclimatisations.

Occasionally the transplanting succeeds too well. An Englishman with a touch of nostalgia—not enough of it to send him back to his Home country—introduced rabbits to Australia. It

would be home-like, he thought, to see rabbits popping in and out of their burrows. That was the beginning. Now there are places in Australia where you can hardly put your foot down without treading on a rabbit, and sufficient of money to build a large navy has had to be spent in keeping the rabbit-pest in check. Another homesick colonist, who came possibly, however, from north of the Tweed, introduced Scottish thistles into the same country with disastrous results.

Yet another English acclimatisation was that of the field daisy to Tasmania. It flourished wonderfully in its new surroundings, and had such a bad effect on the pasturage that a war had to be waged against its spread. But, seeing an English meadow decked with daisies, as thick as stars in the Milky Way, one might almost argue that such beauty is good compensation for a little loss of grass, as my farmer thought with his invaded wheat patch. The wide grass walks of Kew Gardens in the daisy time are lovely enough to make one forget all material things. To give a thought to the niceties of a cow's appetite, or to the yield of butter, when remembering such daisies, would not be possible.

All along the English countryside the gardens

are delicious, from the winsome cottage plots to the nobly sweeping landscape surrounding a typical manor house, blending a hundred individual beauties of lawn, rosery, herb border, walled garden, wild garden into one enchanting mosaic. But, withal, it is the wonderful variety and perfection of the trees that is most remarkable. The affectionate regard for trees in England is a most pleasing thing to one who in his own country has had often to protest against a sort of rage against trees, as if they were enemies of the human race. (The pioneer who has to clear a forest for the sake of his crop and pasture gets into an unhappy habit afterwards of tree-murder out of sheer wantonness.) At Ampthill Park (an old Henry VIII. hunting seat) I have been shown oaks which in Cromwell's time were recorded as "too old to be cut down for the building of ships." They are still carefully preserved, some of them enjoying old-age pensions in the shape of props to keep up their venerable limbs.

Were I advising a friend abroad who knew nothing of England and wished to make a pilgrimage to its chief shrines of beauty, I think I should urge him to come in the late winter to

Plymouth and explore first Cornwall and Devon, seeing, in the first case, how England's "rocky shores beat back the envious siege of watery Neptune." The coming of the waves of an Atlantic storm to Land's End offers a grand spectacle. He should stay in the south-west to see the first breath of spring bring the trees to green, and the earliest of the daffodils to flower. He will very likely encounter some wet weather. The Dartmoor people themselves say :—

The south wind blows and brings wet weather,
The north gives wet and cold together,
The west wind comes brimful of rain,
The east wind drives it back again.
Then if the sun in red should set,
We know the morrow must be wet ;
And if the eve is clad in grey
The next is sure a rainy day.

But despite showers, spring on Dartmoor is a glowing pageant of green and gold. After feasting upon it a week or so, my imaginary pilgrim would make his way to the Thames valley to welcome yet another spring. The Gulf Stream gives the south-west corner of England a softer climate and an earlier spring than the east enjoys. By the time the daffodils are nodding their golden heads in Cornwall, the

crocus will be just showing its flame along the borders of the Thames, and the pilgrim will understand Browning's rapture :—

Oh to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm tree bole are in tiny leaf;
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now !

When once the spring is in full tide towards summer, it is difficult to say where one should search for special beauty in England, for all is so beautiful, from the Yorkshire hills to the Sussex marshes beloved of Coventry Patmore—flat lands whose drowsy beauties glow under the broad sunshine and suggest a tranquil charm of quiet joy tinged with melancholy, too subtle to appeal to the casual “tripper,” but of insistent call to all who understood the more intimate charms of Nature. It is spacious is Sussex. It shelters solitudes. Its quiet, slow-voiced people are sympathetic with their surroundings. When storms rage Sussex takes a new aspect. The screaming of the gulls, the sobbing of the sedges in the wind, the wide, flat expanse laid, as it were, bare

to the rage of the storm, gives to the wind a sense of poignant desolation.

In Sussex, when Henry VIII. was king, many "great cannonees and shotters were caste for His Majestie's service"; and the county was notable for its iron mines and foundries. From Sussex earlier had come all of the 3000 horse-shoes on which an English king's army had galloped to ruin at Bannockburn. Owing to the iron in the soil the Sussex streams sometimes run red, so that "at times the ground weepes bloud." Now there is an end of iron-working there. The foundry at Ashburnham, the last of the Sussex furnaces, was closed down in 1828. One reason given was that the workers were too drunken, helped as they were to unsober habits by the facilities for smuggling in Holland's gin.

But more probably the Sussex ironworks closed down in the main for the same reason that other southern works did. The past two centuries have seen a gradual transference of the great industries and the great centres of population from the south to the north-west and the Midlands. The northern coal mines are the real magnets. So the Sussex iron-workers

of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may not justly be accused of killing an industry with their dissolute love of Holland's gin. Their country is to-day the more picturesque without the iron foundries, though one may give a sigh to Sussex iron, which had the repute of being the toughest in all England.

I have given this little space to Sussex, by way of proof that everywhere in England there is beauty, for Sussex is not a "scenery" county in the general sense. It will, indeed, prove puzzling to my imaginary pilgrim in search of the highest natural beauty of England to find time within one spring and summer to get an idea of its wide variety of charm. Fortunate he if he resists all temptation to rush (by motor car or otherwise) through a "comprehensive tour" mapped out by hours. I remember encountering—with deep pity on my part—a group of delegates to some great Imperial Conference, who were being "shown England" by some misguided and misguiding official. They were at Oxford for lunch, and were due to "do" Oxford and lunch—or rather lunch and Oxford—within three hours. Motoring up they had already "done" a great deal of country in a



A SUSSEX VILLAGE

morning, including a visit to Banbury. After lunch—and Oxford—they were on their way to Worcester and yet farther that day. It was an unhappy experiment in quick-change scenery, proving conclusively the cleverness of motor cars and the stupidity of human beings.

May and June in this fancied Pilgrimage of Beauty should be given up wholly to the Thames valley from Greenwich to Oxford, and past. An intelligent lover of the beautiful in Nature and Art will at least learn in those two months that a life-time is not sufficient for due faithful worship at all the shrines of Beauty he will encounter. My pilgrim has now seen wild coast scenery and river scenery. July should be given to the hills and the lakes, these enchanting lakes which have won new beauties from the poets and wise men who dwelt by them. Then August to the Yorkshire Wolds, with their sweeping outlines, clear in the amber air shining over white roads and blue-green fields.

The attractions of the Yorkshire Wolds are proof against the wet sea-mists, the penetrating winds, and the merciless rain which sometimes sweep over them. The very severity of the weather appeals to nature lovers. The Yorkshire

Wolds terminate on the east with the great Flamborough headland, the chalky cliffs of which have remarkable strength to resist ocean erosion. Owing to this fact Flamborough headland has been for centuries becoming more and more the outstanding feature of the east coast of England, because the sea continues to eat into the low shores of Holderness.

With the end of August comes the end of the English summer (though at times it ends at a very much earlier date, and offers with its brief life poor reason for having appeared at all; "seeing that I was so soon to be done for, why ever was I begun for"). It is then time to go to Kent and see the burnishing of the woods by Autumn, the ripening of hop and apple. To the New Forest afterwards, and the sands of the south coast. At the end of the year our pilgrim will know how varied is the beauty of the English landscape, and how faithfully it is loved in its different forms by those who live near to it.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRAINING OF YOUNG ENGLAND

ALL the world and his wife seem to be agreed that there is something in the English system of education which can work miracles. Boys from all over the world come to England, to school and university, to be trained. And further, the English tutor and the English governess are to be found sprinkled over the globe, teaching some of the young of all nations. There is a recent fashion for German training, "because it is so thorough," and the English system of training (which can certainly fail in a very large proportion of cases to show creditable results when tested by examination paper) comes in for some merciless criticism in its own home country. Nevertheless, it still holds its reputation as the best of systems to make "character."

What exactly character signifies in this connection it would be hard to define in a phrase. But it is that something which makes the young pink English boy fresh from home step, as if by nature born to the job, into the work of administering things, governing inferiors amiably, obeying superiors cheerfully, and keeping up a high tradition of fair play and tolerance. It is that something which made a cute American, after planning out, in theory, the administrative staff of a gigantic enterprise, with experts of all nations in this and that department, to add, "Then I would have an Englishman to run the whole lot of them."

It is an education which trains the character and exercises the mind rather than one which informs—the typical English education. It can turn out, and does turn out, shoals of careless youngsters who know little or nothing of science, mathematics, philosophy, of "the humanities" even, but who give always the impression of having been "well brought up," who have a wise way of doing practical things, and who somehow or other manage to play no mean part in the governance of the world. Observing them, many a foreign parent resolves that his children

shall be trained in the same way. But often he is disappointed. The system is English, and it suits the English mind. Not always is it successful with the foreigner.

All over England are spread the institutions—preparatory schools, public schools, and universities—which are given over to the making of character, and incidentally to the teaching of a few facts. In the ordinary course a boy goes to a preparatory school with a career already mapped out for him, the Navy, the Army, or the Church, or one of the learned professions. If he is destined for the Navy he has to specialise at a very early age; if for the Army, he betakes himself to a military college at a later time; if for the Church or the Bar, or the public service, he passes through the full course of preparatory school, public school, and university.

A great educational institution in England will be found, almost invariably, built in a valley or on a marsh. Perhaps this sort of low living is thought to be conducive to high thinking. A more likely explanation is that most of the great educational institutions are ancient, and in the time of their building any great concourse of people had to settle close to the banks of a

stream. The situation of the schools and universities has had its influence on the course of English education. Oxford and Cambridge, brooding in their low basins, alternately chill and steamy, are ideal places to dream in, and much more suitable for the encouragement of ethical arguments than of the inclination to "hustle." What will happen to the English character when a university comes to be founded on top of a Yorkshire hill I refuse to speculate; the prospect is too remote. But there are indications of the possible course of events in the results of the Scottish universities.

The various schools and universities of England contribute largely to its list of historic and beautiful buildings. The first great educational centre was York. In Roman times York was a fine city. With the coming of the Saxons it reasserted its importance, and became the chief collegiate town of the kingdom. In the seventh and eighth centuries the chief of England's learned men hailed from Northumbria. It was in 657 A.D. that the School of York was founded by Cædmon, first of English poets, and with the York of the early days are linked the names of the venerable Bede, "father of English

learning," John of Beverley, and Wilfrid of York ; also of Alcuin, a great doctor of theology, who was one of the first to hold that " chair " at Cambridge. But York suffered many vicissitudes. Wars interfered with the pursuits of the scholars. At the dawn of the twelfth century Henry I. endeavoured to restore the prosperity of the city and its colleges, with some success.

Meanwhile to the south-east, among the marshes and fens of East Anglia, scholarship had found a fitting place to dream and study. Great monastic houses at Ely and Peterborough—some of the most important in England—were the forerunners of Cambridge University. The earliest community at Cambridge was founded by Dame Hugolina in 1092, in gratitude for her recovery from a serious sickness. Cambridge has never forgotten that feminine foundation, and whilst Oxford was cold to the higher education of women movement, the other university gave the girl graduate a welcome, and pupils of two great Cambridge colleges, the " Girton Girl " and the " Newnham Girl," carried Cambridge culture wherever the English tongue was spoken.

Dame Hugolina's little foundation of six

canons soon extended, until the house held thirty. In 1135 another canons' house was established, which served not only as a retreat for scholars, but as a hospital and travellers' hospice. The third foundation came in the next century, and now Cambridge University began to take definite shape. A church of the Franciscan Friars was used first for university purposes. The older and more learned friars were the professors, the novices and younger friars the undergraduates. Later, the Franciscans were succeeded by the Dominicans, and still later by the Austin Friars in the control of the nascent University. Then there began a movement to make the University independent of any monastic order, and during the fourteenth century the contest was as bitter as one could wish for. Early in the fifteenth century the University had won ground to the extent that it could act in defiance of the Bishop of Ely, and could, moreover, secure a Papal Bull in its favour.

Simultaneously with this movement of the University towards independence of the monks, there had been the inevitable contests of all university towns between "gown's-men" and



THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS, ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

“town’s-men.” Cambridge had never been a city of any great commercial importance. But it had its “unlearned population” engaged in connection with the fisheries, farming, and the pastoral industry. Near by, the great Stourbridge Fair—one of the most important in England—brought every year a great concourse of people with little sympathy to spare for the University students, who, in turn, despised them (or affected to) right heartily, though probably among the younger students there was a lurking sympathy for the jollity of the fairs, a good impression of which one may get from a quaint old ballad of 1762 :—

While gentlefolks strut in their silver and sattins,
 We poor folks are tramping in straw hats and pattens ;
 Yet as merrily old English ballads can sing-o,
 As they at their opperores outlandish ling-o ;
 Calling out, bravo, ankoros, and caro,
 Tho’f I will sing nothing but Bartlemew fair-o.

Here was, first of all, crowds against other crowds driving,
 Like wind and tide meeting, each contrary striving ;
 Shrill fiddling, sharp fighting, and shouting and shrieking,
 Fifes, trumpets, drums, bagpipes, and barrow girls squeaking,
 Come my rare round and sound, here’s choice of fine ware-o,
 Though all was not sound sold at Bartlemew fair-o.

There was drolls, hornpipe dancing, and showing of postures,
 With frying black-puddings ; and op’ning of oysters ;

With salt-boxes solos, and gallery folks squalling ;
The tap-house guests roaring, and mouth-pieces bawling,
Pimps, pawn-brokers, strollers, fat landladies, sailors,
Bawds, bailiffs, jilts, jockies, thieves, tumblers, and taylors.

Here's Punch's whole play of the gun-powder plot, Sir,
With beasts all alive, and pease-porridge all hot, Sir ;
Fine sausages fry'd, and the black on the wire,
The whole court of France, and nice pig at the fire.
Here's the up-and-downs ; who'll take a seat in the chair-o ?
Tho' there's more ups-and-downs than at Bartlemew fair-o.

Here's Whittington's cat, and the tall dromedary,
The chaise without horses, and queen of Hungary ;
Here's the merry-go-rounds, come, who rides, come, who rides,
Sir ?

Wine, beer, ale, and cakes, fine eating besides, Sir ;
The fam'd learned dog that can tell all his letters,
And some men, as scholars, are not much his betters.

This world's a wide fair, where we ramble 'mong gay things ;
Our passions, like children, are tempted by play-things ;
By sound and by show, by trash and by trumpery,
The fal-lals of fashion and Frenchify'd frumpery.
What is life but a droll, rather wretched than rare-o ?
And thus ends the ballad of Bartlemew fair-o.

It is on record that Edward I. in 1254 (whilst still Prince of Wales) visited the town of Cambridge, and acted as arbitrator in quarrels between the townsmen and the students. He decided that thirteen scholars and thirteen burgesses of the town should be chosen to represent both interests on a Board of Control.

His son, Edward II., continued his father's interest in Cambridge, and maintained, at his own expense, a group of scholars there. In 1257 Hugh de Balsham, the tenth bishop of the diocese, placed and endowed at St. John's Hospital a group of secular students known as "Ely students." At this time also Walter de Merton, Chancellor of England, assigned his manor of Malden, Surrey, as endowment for "poor scholars in the schools of Cambridge, who were to live according to his directions." In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in this as at other universities, scholars lived each at his own charge. Sometimes three or four clubbed together, but each had his own "founder and benefactor." Some scholars elected their own principal, and paid a fixed rate for board and lodging, and this hostel system developed into the collegiate system which distinguishes English universities from all others. Now Cambridge has seventeen of these colleges.

Among the architectural features of special interest at Cambridge is a chapel built by Matthew Wren, the uncle of Sir Christopher Wren. It is a fine specimen of seventeenth-century work. The various college buildings

date from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. The dates are : Michaelhouse 1324, Clare 1338, Peterhouse 1284, King's Hall 1337, Pembroke 1347, Gonville Hall 1348, Trinity Hall 1356, Corpus Christi 1382, King's College 1441, Queens' 1448, St. Catharine's 1473, Jesus 1495, Christ's 1505, St. John's 1509, Magdalene 1542, Trinity 1546, Caius 1557, Emmanuel 1584, Sidney Sussex 1595. Modern colleges are Downing College, Girton College, and Newnham College. Girton College occupies Girton Manor on the Huntingdon Road, an eleventh-century house built by Picot the Norman Sheriff of Cambridge. Earlier it had been the site of a Roman and Anglo-Saxon burial-ground. The college was founded by Madame Bodichon and Miss Emily Davies. Newnham College began in a hired house with five students in 1871. Miss Anne J. Clough was the founder. The present Newnham Hall is composed of several buildings acquired since.

For the historical student a brief roll of some of Cambridge's great men would include : Green, Lyly, Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Nash, Fletcher, Sterne, Thackeray, Bacon, Milton, Dryden, Cranmer, the two great Cecils, Walsingham, Cromwell, Walpole, Chesterfield, Pitt, Wilber-

force, Castlereagh, Palmerston, Herrick, Hutchinson, Marvell, Jeremy Taylor, Ascham, Erasmus, Spenser, Wren, Hook, Evelyn, More, Newton, and Darwin.

Meanwhile Oxford waits us, with no impatience, secure in her calm sense of dignity. There is a story of an Irishman with a great idea of his own dignity. But he was careless, he professed, as to the place at table assigned to him. "Wherever I am seated," he said, "that is the head of the table." Oxford is sometimes credited with having a feeling of rivalry for Cambridge. A mimic war of wits has been waged over the fancied rivalry, of which one epigram that sticks in my memory is, that "Cambridge breeds philosophers and Oxford burns them" (I have not the exact words, perhaps, but that is the sentiment). In truth, though, Oxford has no sense of rivalry. She knows herself to be peerless, incomparable, the centre of the educational aspiration, not only of England but of the world. In her atmosphere of drowsy ritual she broods serene as Buddha. And she does not burn philosophers nowadays, however heretical may seem to be their ideas. Indeed the Oxford of to-day shelters beneath its imperturbable calm,

behind its moss-grown walls, all the "latest fashions" in beliefs.

As to the first beginnings of Oxford—the town *not* the University has just been celebrating its millenary—Anthony à Wood records this tale of its first origin: "When Fredeswyde had bin soe long absent from hence, she came to Binsey (triumphing with her virginity) into the city mounted on a milk-white ox betokening Innocency, and as she rode along the streets she would forsooth be still speaking to her ox, 'Ox, forth'—or (as it is related) 'bos perge,' that is 'Ox, goe on,' or 'Ox, go forth'—and hence they indiscreetly say that our city was from thence called Oxforth or Oxford." It is fairly certain that Didau and the daughter Fredeswide established a nunnery and built a church there in the eighth century. The town was rebuilt by Ethelred in the eleventh century.

Before the Norman Conquest Oxford was a notable city, often visited by the reigning kings, sometimes the meeting-place of Parliaments. This prominence brought with it many troubles. It was often sacked and in part burned. These incidents despite, it grew to be a prosperous medieval walled city. A Benedictine scholastic

house on the site of Worcester College was the beginning of the University.

Early in the thirteenth century William of Durham, with a company of others, shook from off their English shoes the dust of Paris University after a "town and gown row" there, and settled at Oxford, and then the University began to take shape. He gave money to the University to found a "Hall" for students. Many other halls were founded (half of the Oxford Inns are, or were, perversion of old "Halls"). William of Wykeham gave a code of rubrics which became a legacy to the whole University. He built a college for the exclusive use of scholars of the foundation. He built also bell-tower, cloisters, kitchen, brewery, and bakehouse for "New" College. New College was the first home for scholars at Oxford. Lincoln College was next founded, after that All Souls, then Magdalen. Duke Humphrey of Gloucester gave the nucleus of the famous Bodleian library to the Benedictine monks. Christ Church was built with the revenues of a suppressed monastery.

So every step in English history for ten centuries can be remembered by the stones of Oxford. That fine library building of All Souls,

which holds as one of its treasures Wren's original plans for St. Paul's Cathedral, was built out of sugar money from the West Indies, being the gift of a great sugar planter in the early days of the making of the Empire.

During the wars of Cavaliers and Roundheads Oxford suffered some shrewd blows. It was for the King always, and after the Restoration the Court recognised its loyalty. Charles II. with his Queen—and eke another lady or so as a rule—was often a visitor, and spent a great part of the Plague Year there, though “the Merry Monarch” showed no want of pluck or loyalty to his sore-stricken people during that time, and did not abandon London altogether. But all who could got out of London for a while to escape the horrors of which Pepys has given so clear a record in his diary and letters, as in the following to Lady Carteret :—

The absence of the Court and emptiness of the city takes away all occasion of news, save only such melancholy stories as would rather sadden than find your Ladyship any divertisement in the hearing; I have stayed in the city till above 7400 died in one week, and of them above 6000 of the plague, and little noise heard day or night but tolling of bells; till I could walk Lumber-street, and not meet twenty persons from one



ST. MAGDALEN, TOWER AND COLLEGE, OXFORD

end to the other, and not 50 upon the Exchange ; till whole families, 10 and 12 together, have been swept away ; till my very physician, Dr. Burnet, who undertook to secure me against any infection, having survived the month of his own house being shut up, died himself of the plague ; till the nights, though much lengthened, are grown too short to conceal the burials of those that died the day before, people being thereby constrained to borrow daylight for that service : lastly, till I could find neither meat nor drink safe, the butcheries being everywhere visited, my brewer's house shut up, and my baker, with his whole family, dead of the plague.

Greenwich begins apace to be sickly ; but we are, by the command of the King, taking all the care we can to prevent its growth ; and meeting to that purpose yesterday, after sermon, with the town officers, many doleful informations were brought us, and, among others, this, which I shall trouble your Ladyship with the telling :—Complaint was brought us against one in the town for receiving into his house a child newly brought from an infected house in London. Upon inquiry, we found that it was the child of a very able citizen in Gracious Street, who, having lost already all the rest of his children, and himself and wife being shut up and in despair of escaping, implored only the liberty of using the means for the saving of this only babe, which with difficulty was allowed, and they suffered to deliver it, stripped naked out at a window into the arms of a friend, who, shifting into fresh clothes, conveyed it thus to Greenwich, where, upon this information from Alderman Hooker, we suffer it to remain. This I tell your Ladyship as one instance of the miserable straits our poor neighbours are reduced to.

Pepys himself had taken refuge then at Greenwich. All had left who could, even to dour old John Milton, whose plague retreat at Chalfont St. Giles (Bucks) is now preserved as an historical relic, and usually holds the attention of the rushing tourist, who is "doing" England within a month, for quite seven minutes. That is really space for a matured consideration to the tourist mind.

"The motor has slowed down from seventy miles an hour to fifty miles an hour. We are passing a point of great historic interest." That is sight-seeing in Europe for the American tourist according to one of their own humorists. I have had many opportunities to observe the truth on which that sarcasm is based. Take Milton's Cottage for an instance. I had walked there from Chorley Wood one spring afternoon, and was enjoying idly the blooms in the little garden, when a motor rushed up, disgorged a party of hurried tourists, of which the man member had a guide-book. "Is this Milton's Cottage?" It was: so they entered. "Is this really Milton's chair? Sure?" It was. So they all sat on it solemnly in turn. Within five minutes their chariot of petrol had wrapped



BROAD STREET, OXFORD, LOOKING WEST

them up again, and they were rushing over the face of England to see some shrine of the Pilgrim Fathers.

But we have rambled from Oxford, which is, by the way, much cursed of the rushing tourist, who has a plan for "doing" it in an hour, and gallops from the Bodleian to Shelley's Tomb, and Addison's Walk, the Old Wall, the Tower of St. Michael's, and is away in a cloud of dust, without having gained the barest hint of the subtle persuasive charm of Oxford; without a thought of seeing St. Mary's Tower afloat in the moonlight; of hearing the choir of Magdalen; of drowsing an afternoon under the elms; or of seeking, with all due reverence and modesty, to gain an entrance to some of those august companies of Oxford—of undergraduates dreaming their exalted young dreams, of dons musing their deep thoughts.

I own to it that I feel it difficult to write of Oxford, though, alas! I am able to write with facility of many places visited and things experienced. There is something of rebuke towards quick generalisations and easy judgments in the atmosphere of the place. I have been to Oxford many times. My very first dinner in England

was with the Fellows of All Souls, a feast of solemn yet cheerful splendour in four rooms, one for the dinner itself, yet another for dessert, another for coffee, and finally, another for tobacco. Another time I was at Oxford to lecture to a gathering of dons and undergraduates on social problems in Australia; yet another time to prove that the young athletes of the University were conquerable at *épée* fencing. But never have I got over a first awe of the place. To attempt to probe to its soul seems an impertinence. Oxford has an atmosphere of the Round Table.

Rather than attempt to give my own impressions, I prefer to quote others, and to state facts. That Herodotus of social life, Pepys, found Oxford "a very sweet place," spent two shillings and sixpence on a barber in its honour, and gave ten shillings "to him that showed us All Souls College and Chickley's picture." He concludes, "Oxford a mighty fine place. . . . Cheap entertainment." Pepys was not troubled evidently by any awe of the place. There is, by the way, astonishingly little in the poetic literature of England about Oxford, seeing that so many poets have lived and studied there.

The University of Oxford, for all its devotion to the King, would not follow James II. on the path towards Rome. When on his accession he was welcomed to Oxford, "the fountains ran claret for the vulgar." But when he tried to force his Roman Catholic nominee into the presidency of Magdalen, he could not even get a blacksmith to force a door for him. Oxford was for the Church and the Throne, but for the Church first. Nowadays Oxford is very much interested in social problems. It is Conservative still, but many of its young men have a flavour of socialism, generally of a "non-revolutionary" and Christian type.

Material life at Oxford is exceedingly pleasant, not to say luxurious. The undergraduates "do themselves" very well. Kitchen and buttery maintain agreeably historic reputations, and the old college buildings have been modernised to the extent of admitting electric light and sanitary plumbing. But bath-rooms are rare: the good old English "tub" which a servant makes ready in the morning with a ewer of water is still a feature of the college bedroom.

It is the social life and the college system, with its fine mixture of independence and ward-

ship, which make Oxford sought for as a school for "character." But one may also gain much learning there if one wishes. Still it is hardly essential. You may emerge from Oxford with a degree, but with astonishingly little knowledge. To the "Babu" type of mind in particular—that easily memorising, non-comprehending type of mind—a degree at Oxford is particularly easy of attainment. (The University, by the way, attracts very many coloured students, from India, from Africa, and from other parts of the world.) The man, too, of real intelligence who is willing to seek a degree in the manner of the Babu can easily fritter away the most of his student hours at Oxford, and win through his examinations by cramming at the last moment.

Since Oxford is so typical of the best of English life, it is fitting that it should be a place of very sweet and dignified gardens. There is the grandeur of elegant simplicity about Oxford gardens; and the Oxford trees—beeches, elms, limes, oaks—are surely the finest in all the world. Oxford history is curiously linked with trees. William of Waynflete commanded that Magdalen be built against an oak that fell a hundred years before, aged six hundred years.



ETON UPPER SCHOOL AND LONG WALK, FROM COMMON LANE HOUSE

Sir Thomas Whiteway “learned in a dream” to build a college where there was a “triple elm tree,” and that fixed the site of St. Thomas. To-day the green of the Spring in the precincts of Trinity and Magdalen is a green which speaks of all peace and wise comprehension.

So much space has been given to Oxford and Cambridge, where young England receives the crowning garlands of the academies, that I can do no more than briefly mention the great public schools: Eton, under the shadow of the King’s castle at Windsor; Harrow, on a hill a little apart from London; Winchester, nestling in the valley where, if tradition can be trusted, King Arthur once held a court; Rugby, in the Midlands, enjoying a sturdier climate and giving to the world that very manly exercise, Rugby football. These and others might each have a book to themselves with justice. But in this volume we must move on to see something of adult England.

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND AT WORK

A GOOD proportion of young English manhood after having passed through their course of education at home are claimed away from their country. The Indian Civil Service, the Services of the Crown Colonies, the Navy, the Army garrisons abroad, the immigration demand of the Overseas' Dominions—all these make a tax on the numbers of adult England; and unfortunately the tax is much more heavy upon the numbers of males than of females. Thus there is a great disproportion of sexes in England. The females far outnumber the males, especially in the cities. But after all the demands have been met, there are still some millions of Englishmen left. Let us see the work they do, the home life they lead.

First of all, if a young Englishman is of the well-to-do order, and is ambitious, he will strive



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, LONDON

to take some part in politics. He may not be born to be a member of the House of Lords: and only six hundred or so of him can hope to become members of the House of Commons. But there are numerous other avenues of political activity, such as County Councils and Committees of all kinds. It is a wholesome aspiration of the best type of Englishmen to take some part, not necessarily a paid part, in the government and administration of their country. The supreme ambition, then, of the young Englishman may be said to be to work in the House of Commons; and that keeps "the Mother of Parliaments," in spite of all that pessimists may say, the leading legislative body of the world.

In its vast membership the House of Commons includes experts on every subject under the sun. There is no topic of debate imaginable on which some member cannot speak as a past-master. And the House insists that if you wish to engage its attention you must have something to say. You may halt or stumble in your speech, but you must have something to say or you will fail to get a hearing, no matter how charmingly you may talk. That helps the debate to a high level, discouraging talk for mere talk's sake.

“ Mr. Speaker,” who presides over the House of Commons, seems to be always a genius in the art of managing a deliberative assembly. At any rate, one never hears of a weak “ Mr. Speaker.” The present one takes it to be his duty to suppress all irrelevance and all tediousness in debate. He insists that a member shall say his say without circumlocution or repetition. With the vigilance of a ratting terrier he watches for discursiveness, and pounces upon the offender at once. I recollect a debate on the Indian question, arising out of the House of Lords’ amendments in an Indian governing Councils Bill. All the speakers in the debate were experts with an inside knowledge of Indian affairs. They all spoke with terseness and directness. But there were, nevertheless, four interruptions from Mr. Speaker, that “ the hon. member was not sticking to the point at issue.” In each case you recognised that Mr. Speaker was right. In one case, and one case only, did the rebuked member attempt to argue the point. “ I was only going to point out, Mr. Speaker,” he started. The whole House rose against him. “ ‘Vide, ’Vide,” they called from front and cross and back benches. He attempted again, and again the

cries of “ ‘Vide ’ ” drowned his voice ; and he had to submit without argument. The House clearly believed in its tyrant. It requires a curious sort of genius to be so able to “ proof-read ” a current debate and hit at once on the first divergence into redundancy.

If a “ Mr. Speaker ” is to become a tradition as one of the greatest of the many great Mr. Speakers, then he must have a sense of humour as well as a gift of prompt decision. The present Mr. Speaker has that qualification. He does not say “ funny ” things. But in almost every ruling and reproof there is a slight flavour of fun. A rule of the House was made after the “ Suffragettes ” made trouble once or twice in the chamber, that the Women’s Gallery, a curious gilded bird-cage perched up in the roof of the House, should be open only to “ relatives of members.” Mr. Speaker was asked to define what closeness of relation justified admission. “ That,” said Mr. Speaker, “ I must leave to the individual consciences of hon. members.” The House chuckled and understood that any respectable person could be counted as a feminine relative for purposes of admission to the gallery.

For the student of the origins of the English

race it is interesting—and quite easy of accomplishment if you have an acquaintance who is a member of Parliament—to see the quaint ceremony in the Lords of the Royal Assent being given to Bills. On the occasion on which I attended, the Chancellor and two Peers, acting as Commissioners for the King, sat in solemn state, the Chancellor finding obvious difficulty in accommodating both a huge wig and a cocked hat on his head. To them entered as far as the Bar of the House, on summons, some of the Commons, heralded by Black Rod and led by the Speaker. The titles of the Bills were recited by a clerk, and, with much ritual of bowing, the Royal Assent was granted in Norman French: “Le Roy le veult.” It was rather a pity that the Bills were painfully prosaic ones, dealing with tramways and the like. The elaborate medieval ceremony would have been more fitting to some great measure of statecraft. Still it did not seem incongruous. That is a characteristic of London. It is a medieval city modernised, but without the flavour of the medievalism being spoiled.

Of course it is well known that the present are not the original Houses of Parliament; it may not

be so familiar a fact that Westminster Hall covers the old site, and that tablets, let into its walls, mark the limits, curiously small, of the old House of Commons. The King is supposed by tradition to open Parliament in the Hall of Westminster on the old site of the Commons. But to do so he would have to stand exactly on the spot where King Charles I. rose to receive a death sentence from his revolted Commons; and I think that lately our monarchs have shown sentimental objections to this and have let tradition in the matter go.

The House of Lords and the House of Commons are built in the one straight line, with the lobbies intervening. The King, when seated on the throne, can see right through (all the doors being open) to the Speaker on his chair some four hundred yards away. The Lords have the finer debating hall; but the Commons, it is complained, monopolise all the comfortable smoking and lounge rooms. Evidently they think that the noble lords have enough comfort in their own homes.

Lately a committee of the Houses of Parliament have been discussing the question of redecorating the buildings, and have come practically to the conclusion to do nothing. In

some of the halls mural paintings of a rather astonishing kind, betraying a time when artistic standards were a little lower than now, cover the panels. To fill the gaps with paintings of this epoch would make for incongruity. To imitate the old-fashioned and rather bad-fashioned existing panels does not seem advisable. So probably the difficulty will be solved by doing nothing, unless a daring wight suggests the painting out of some old work to make room for a complete set of modern frescoes. Probably, if there were just now an unquestionably pre-eminent British artist offering for the work, that would be done. As it is, the Mother of Parliaments remains with some of her halls a little patchy in decoration ; some of them, indeed, a good deal ugly.

But, of course, governing the country is the business of the few. Tempting though it is to linger on at Westminster, let us see other classes of England at work. The historic industry of England is agriculture, and it is to this day one of the most important, though a dwindling one lately. Still, however, the English are an agricultural people ; though it is around the agriculture of a century ago that their affections are entwined.

Modern agriculture, nevertheless, hardly exists in England, neither in the production of grain nor of fruit. The average orchard seems better designed to be an insectarium for the cultivation of pests than for the growth of good fruit. Straggling unkempt trees, growing for the most part their own wild way, naturally do not produce like the well-disciplined trees of the modern orchardist. But the soil is wondrous kind. That anything at all should come of such culture, or neglect of culture, is to be explained by a great graciousness of Nature.

Fruit is the text I take, because fruit is at once the worst example, and the most obvious one. But in no branch of agriculture is there anything approaching to modern scientific farming. Wheat-farming represents the crown of agricultural achievement in England, and very good yields per acre are garnered, because the tillage is careful, the manuring generous, the climate favourable. But what gross waste of labour is involved in the cultivation of these tiny fields, laboriously ploughed, in many instances with a single furrow plough; sown by hand and often reaped, yes reaped, with scythe-men and picturesque but unthrifty gathering of haymakers!

But there is this to be said for the old-fashioned English agriculture, that it is very, very picturesque. The tiny hedge-divided fields, the orchards in which the trees grow to forest dimensions, are far more pleasing to the eye than the great, bare, wire-fence-divided wheat-fields of Canada and Australia ; or their orchards with close-clipped trees kept working with all their might for a living and not allowed the luxury of a single vagrant branch or the sight of any green carpet of grass beneath. And, withal, in England, farming is not a commercial speculation altogether. If it relied upon its commercial success, it would die out almost completely. But the old landholders love their estates : the newly rich, if they are of the English spirit, aspire to become landholders. Both are usually content if from their agricultural estates they are able to make the products pay a slight profit only.

The area under tillage shows, therefore, a tendency to dwindle, though already it is very small, considering the thick population of the country. Love of sport and love of seeing the woods in their wild state have always set apart a great area of England for forest and for game preserve. Nowadays we do not make a deer



HARVESTING IN HEREFORDSHIRE

forest as roughly as did William the Conqueror the New Forest for the sake of the deer "whom he loved as if he had been their father." But somehow land passes out of cultivation to become moorland or forest. These "waste lands" are far from being useless, however. They graze ponies and cows; they are deer forests, grouse moors, pheasant preserves, golf links. Land is more valuable for sport than for agriculture, and therefore it drifts to the use of sport, and peasants make way for pheasants.

A fine tract of oak forest has been left at the Forest of Dean near the borders of Wales—the finest forest tract probably in England. It is a wild tract of steep hills covered with oaks, used for the building of the Navy in the days before the wooden walls had given way to steel ramparts.

The fen areas alone are in course of reclamation from the wild to the cultivated state. The work of bringing them back to usefulness was begun under Charles I. by Dutch engineers. Now a great part of the old fen lands are good productive meadows bounded by a network of dykes and drains, from which the surplus of water is pumped into the channels of the Ouse

and other rivers, and so finds its way to the North Sea. Like the similar land of Holland, these reclaimed fens are excellent for the culture of bulbs, and Lincolnshire has made quite an industry of sending narcissi to the London market.

Considering the Englishman at his work in other capacities, he is iron-founder, pottery-maker, textile-weaver, miner, and of course sailor and merchant. His work is characterised by a great solidness and honesty. There is not much "gimcrack" work turned out in England. The spirit of her workshops is to make things that will last, not short-life tools and machines, such as some other peoples love. Indeed they do say that the idols made at Birmingham—a large proportion of the idols for the heathens of the world are made at Birmingham—are made so solidly as to suggest that the manufacturers have grave doubts about Paganism being supplanted among their customers for some generations.

Occasionally, indeed, one is tempted to believe that the Englishman loves work for work's own sake. I concluded this on first landing at Liverpool, when it took an hour's effort, on an average, for each passenger from the mail steamer

to sort out his luggage. At Euston at least another half-hour was wasted in the same way. All that might have been avoided by a luggage check system such as prevails in Australia, America, and other countries. But evidently the English character for steady energy and stolid good humour is built up partly by following the sport of luggage-hunting.

The English public and semi-public service, which gives to the visitor the first view of the Englishman at work, is simply beyond praise. In the railway service, the civility of the guards and porters, the neatness, the quiet energy of the drivers and firemen, are notable. In most countries railway engines seem always dirty and ill-kept. In England they are bright and clean. That shows a workman's pride in his work and its instruments. It is the man with the clean engines who is going to win through in the end.

I have a means of comparison of the public service in the United States and in England. In New York a letter addressed to me at a newspaper office went astray through a clerk refusing to take it in. I inquired for it at the New York Central Post Office: was—not very civilly—re-

ferred to the particular district post office which had attempted to deliver the letter. A clerk there could not see that anything could be done—"the letter would be opened, probably, and returned to the writer. . . . Perhaps if I applied at the Washington Dead Letter Office it would do some good." I applied by letter (unanswered), then personally, and was told in a tired way that the matter would be looked into and I should be communicated with in London. That is the last I ever heard of the matter.

Now in London one morning I left a small despatch case in a motor omnibus. Reporting to Scotland Yard, I stated that the papers in the portfolio were important and their recovery urgent. The police officer at once volunteered to wire round to every police station in the metropolitan district (200 of them), reporting the loss and asking that word should be at once sent if the article were handed in. Before eleven that night a police officer called at my house with a despatch from Scotland Yard that the case had been found.

"The public good" depends largely on the efficiency of the public service. It can never be real when the Government and the instruments

of the Government are careless of the people's convenience. The efficiency of the Post Office, the police, and the park servants in England is great proof of a sound national spirit.

When the Englishman is through with his work—whether it be the large and dignified work of administering his Empire, or the smaller task of driving a tram—he goes home; and he is not a really happy Englishman, whatever his class, if his home has not at least the sight of a green tree. He is willing, even if he is poor and condemned to work long hours, to travel long distances each day so that he may have at the end of his work a home to come to which will please his love of green England.

Having noted that the Englishman's home is, whenever possible, adorned with a little bit of green garden, step over its threshold and consider its domestic economy; that is to say, see the Englishwoman at her special work. This must be done by classes.

In the wealthiest class the house is perfectly managed. It seems to run like the fabled machine of perpetual motion. There is no sign of the driving-power, no racket, no effort. Breakfast is a meal of charming informality, which,

I think, illustrates best the domestic ideals of the Englishman. Self-help from amply furnished sideboards and from tea and coffee urns is the rule. There is no fixed moment for coming to breakfast, and, since you help yourself, no servants need to be in attendance. How pleasantly thought-out is this idea! You have not the urging to an inconvenient punctuality of the thought that you are keeping servants waiting. Dinner is a ceremony of ritual. It is the social crown of the day. You are expected to treat it with the considerateness due to its importance. To be asked to dinner is the sign of the Englishman's complete acceptance of you as a desirable person. (He may ask you to lunch without admitting quite as much.) To be asked, casually, "to eat with us" at dinner time shows a degree of friendliness which is willing to allow some familiarity.

It is because the luxury of upper-class life in England is so suave and so refined that it does not challenge antagonism as does the arrogant wealth of other lands. An English manor house, such as Stoke Court—once upon a time the house of the poet Grey—is, from its beautiful surroundings to the last detail of a curtain, as

fine a product as civilisation can show. And the Englishman's home is for himself, his friends, and, in so far as it can claim to be of any public interest, for the enjoyment also of the mass of his fellow-countrymen.

The casual traveller through London may, on several days of the year, see a great crowd of omnibuses and drags outside Buckingham Palace, and learn that the grounds of the King's palace had been that day thrown open to the public. To a large extent the royal palaces thus welcome the people as guests; and the great houses of the nobility, which have fine collections of paintings, are in very many cases treated as semi-public institutions. This shows a fine public spirit and feeling of common patriotism between classes.

The middle class fashions itself, as closely as it can, on the upper class. Its home is often as admirably managed, though on a smaller scale. Its observance of etiquette is more rigid, especially in the "lower middle class." Smooth home-management is the Englishman's (or the Englishwoman's) gift. The domestic economy of the country cottager seems generally good, but the city worker often makes the mistake of trying to ape the standards of richer people, sacrificing

a good deal of material comfort to have, for instance, his “ drawing-room ” or parlour.

But on the whole the Englishman's home proves as high a standard of taste and good feeling as the twentieth century can offer. It is a fine reward for the work-doer, a fine fortress from which to issue forth to work. Let us now see England at play.



FOOTBALL AT RUGBY SCHOOL.

CHAPTER VI

ENGLAND AT PLAY

“THESE English take their pleasures sadly,” said a French wit. It was a misunderstanding of the national expression. The Englishman takes his pleasures not sadly but resolutely. It is a holiday. He is out to enjoy himself. He *will* enjoy himself whatever the obstacles. There is a grim resolve in his mind. But he is not sad : he is resolutely merry. That look on his face is not agony ; it is stern determination.

I have seen Hampstead Heath on the midsummer Bank Holiday. A frowning sky, a bleak wind, and occasional gusty showers of rain declared the day to be not of midsummer and not suitable to open-air holiday. But the East End was not to be deterred from merriment. “London’s playground” was like a huge ant-hill with swarming holiday-makers, and all had

made up their dogged English minds to rejoice and be merry. That was apparent from the first.

In the "Tube" railways girls of from sixteen to sixty—all girly—giggled hilariously at everything and anything and nothing. "It's from the other side" announced one on the train platform; and this fact about the train's going was greeted with shouting laughter, and the "joke" went round a widening circle of rippling merriment. On the road, the coster's cart, loaded with Mr. and Mrs. Coster and a group of Costerlings—the numerousness of which said "no race suicide here"—scattered abroad song, vociferous if not tuneful. When a shower came the song grew louder, as though to smother the weather.

Commerce helped the people's resolve to be gay. You could buy a bag of confetti for a halfpenny; for the same sum a stick adorned with bright paper streamers, or a tuft of gorgeously-dyed flax. A penny provided a tartan cap in paper, wearing which one might be quite ridiculously gay. The oceans had been dredged and the earth rifled for the people's holiday. Shellfish of all sorts, bananas from the West

Indies, plums from Spain, roses from Kent and Surrey, pine-apple tinned at Singapore, bright nacre shells from Australian beaches, little love-birds from Papua trained as "fortune-tellers" to pick out a paper telling you of the happiness in store for you—all these were at your service; and the standard price was one penny. A few coppers opened up for the holiday Englishman the resources of a whole Empire.

Over all lowered a grey sky. But what mattered that! The factory girls danced on the gravel paths to the music of barrel organs (sometimes, indeed, of the humble mouth organ), danced often with verve, and always with hilarity. The Australian larrikin and his "donah" dance at "down the harbor" picnics with a fixed solemnity of face, as if performing some weird corybantic rite. The London coster and his girl are determinedly merry. The merriment may be in some cases forced, but it is forced with grit. A dance on the road is broken up to allow a cart to slowly creep past. It is resumed with perfect good humour, and with the same gay whoops.

Yet there is nothing orgiastic in the merriment. Among the many many thousands you

may notice here and there a man and—far worse sight—occasionally a girl the worse for drink, prompting the thought that if public opinion won't keep women out of the bars the licensing law should ; but the great mass of the crowd is quite sober : the merriment is not vinous.

If dancing, shouting, or “ spooning ”—discouraged neither by the gaze of the public nor the dampness of the weather—did not amuse, there were more intellectual amusements. You might have your head read for a penny, your character diagnosed by your eye for the same sum ; or you might see an old man making a fairly good pretence of hanging himself, and he left it to your honesty to subscribe the penny.

The Englishman take his pleasures sadly ? Not a bit of it. That roar from the Old Bull and Bush, the crackling laughter around all the booths and from all the crowded paths, tell that the Englishman can become very gay on quite slight encouragement.

A day at Southend, another great “ popular place of amusement,” gives the same impression of resolute gaiety. A good-humoured crowd packs the cheap-trip trains. There are more passengers than seats ; and young fellows take

it amiably in turn to stand, leaving the elders and the womenfolk to sit throughout. At Southend there is no beach, as one understands the term elsewhere—a scimitar curve of gleaming sand on which blue waves break, showing their white teeth in smiles. The “beach” is just a flat, which at high tide the sea covers, to leave it at low tide a wide muddy expanse of marshy soil. But the seaside trippers make the best of it. The cliffs are thronged with happy picnickers. The beach is dotted with waders, who go out many hundreds of yards along the wet flat, and in some mysterious way enjoy themselves. Where at last the water starts there are bathers disporting from boats. A pier which stretches out its long straightness and suggests a task rather than a pleasure, is filled with happy promenaders, who sniff up the smell of the seaweed and recognise it as ozone. They mostly wear yachting caps, or some other costume sign of the seaside, and an air of nautical adventure.

Yes, the Englishman has a great faculty of enjoying himself. I am indeed struck, in many aspects of life, at the Englishman’s faculty of being cheerful under what one would consider

depressing conditions. The Englishman does not hesitate to take his girl to the cemetery to court her. A London friend asked me, with real enthusiasm, to look at the "fine view" from his flat, and it looked out on an old Plague Cemetery, where the victims of the London plague nourish the green of the trees. The Englishman take his pleasures sadly? Rather he takes his sadnesses pleasurably.

It is the Englishman of the industrial classes I have pictured amusing himself. As to the richer folk, is there anything fresh to be said? Does not every one at least think that he knows? Have not "society" novelists innumerable, from "Ouida" downwards, given us studies of English "society" people at play, making the home life of the duke open for inspection by the meanest intelligence? Are there not numberless penny and halfpenny papers carrying on the good work to this day?

If one can contrive to put out of one's mind all that nonsense and observe with intelligence, one will find that the middle-class Englishman and the rich Englishman amuse themselves after very much the same manner as do the people of the poorer classes. They refine on the

methods, but the spirit is the same. At heart, the Englishman of all classes loves feasting and boisterous jollity. Education and breeding may modify his tastes, but they are still there. *Au fond*, the typical Englishman likes best a joke that has a savour of the "practical" in it. Give him his natural rein, and duke's son, cook's son—if there are any English cooks left to have sons—will lightly incline his thoughts to horse-play when he wishes to be genuinely amused.

Yet perhaps this, too, passes. I remember thinking so, Lord Mayor's Day 1909, when the procession through the city proved to be not a "show," but a display of the defence guards of the nation. Perhaps this may be taken as a hint of a growing earnestness in English life, of a recognition of stern struggles to come and only to be met with resolved and steady vigour. It had, of a surety, some significance—the sudden casting off on the city's great festival day of an old habit of childish play and the putting in its place of a display of soldiers and sailors, and boys who will one day be soldiers and sailors. Of some significance, too, was the ready, popular acquiescence in the change. Crowds that had been for years regaled on such occasions with

broad pantomime, all fun and levity, were faced of a sudden with serious drama—soldiers in glittering mail, still more impressive soldiers in uniforms of the colour of earth; Boy Scouts playing at being soldiers and enjoying the most wholesome game; war paraphernalia of wagons and field telegraphs and field hospitals, and guns of all kinds, from the great mastiff siege-guns drawn by eight horses, which the Navy taught the Army to make mobile, down to the vicious little terrier pom-poms. And the people cheered the change. There was no hint at a protest against the departure from the stage of the old vanities. After a quieter method than that which came of Savonarola's teaching, but none the less surely, they had gone to destruction, and in their place was a dutiful parade of citizens armed for the defence of their homes: and the people approved. The Balaclava veterans and the Boy Scouts shared the honours of the day. Gog and Magog were not; but the crowd would have its symbolism, and cheered the ideal of tried valour, the ideal of aspiring youth, as they saw them seriously personified.

In 1910 and 1911 there was the same "sober-minded" Lord Mayor's Day; and the old panto-



CRICKET AT LORD'S

mime procession clearly will never be revived. Perhaps now the English nation is at last "growing up" to be too old for such elemental humours. If so, does the fact speak for good augury or evil augury? I wonder. A well-known Scottish artist of the day, who lives in Paris "because it is the place for all rebels and all ideas," and sells his pictures in London and America, told me once very solemnly, "When the English people get artistic and witty they are going to go down. It is the Philistinism of England that proves her national strength and sanity." I reassured him by telling him that most of the statues erected in England nowadays were those of men in trousers, and we were comforted to think that there was still enough of Philistinism in England to keep her safe and sound. But it does look as though the Englishman were losing his enjoyment of primitive humour when he vetoes Gog and Magog on Lord Mayor's Day. Also he begins to live in hotels and to dine at restaurants when he is not travelling. Yes, on the surface all peoples grow sadly alike, and that charm of travel which comes from the stimulating contact of the mind with the more obvious differences between lands and peoples threatens

to vanish in a generation or two, through the fashion of admiring all countries but one's own spreading, and through each country learning to imitate some other. Still, the threat has been often made before without justifying itself. In Shakespeare's time it was Italy

Whose manners still our tardy apish nation
Limps after in base imitation.

But we did not in the end become Italians. In spite of surface imitations the deeper differences which come from the tap-roots of nations remain.

The Lord Mayor's Day of the old style of buffoonery is dead. But there is, on the other hand, a movement in England nowadays—a happy and wholesome movement—to revive the festivities of May Day, which once was the great festival of the country-side. The old chronicles in their descriptions of May Day rejoicings provide a very delectable picture. This from Bourne :—

On the calends or first of May, commonly called May Day, the Juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight and walk to some neighbouring wood accompanied with music and blowing of horns, where they break down branches of trees and adorn them with nosegays and crowns of flowers; when this is done they return homewards about the rising of the sun and make their doors and windows to triumph with

their flowery spoils and the after part of the day is chiefly spent in dancing round a tall pole, called a May-pole and being placed in a convenient part of the village stands there, as it were consecrated to the Goddess of Flowers without the least violation being offered to it in the whole circle of the year.

Stubbes, writing in 1595, describes closely the bringing home of the May-pole :—

Against May Day . . . every parish, towne or village assemble themselves, both men, women and children and either all together or dividing themselves into companies, they goe some to the woods and groves some to the hills and mountains where they spend all the night in pleasant pastime and in the morning return bringing with them birch boughs and branches of trees to deck their assemblies withal. But their chieftest jewel they bring thence is the Maie pole which they bring home with great veneration as thus—they have twentie to fortie yoake of oxen, every oxe having a sweet noseгаie of flowers tied to the top of his horns, and these oxen draw home the Maypoale which they covered all over with flowers and herbes bound round with strings from the top to the bottome and sometimes it was painted with colours, having two or three hundred men, women and children following in great devotion. . . . Then fall they to banquetting and feasting, to leaping and dancing about it, as heathen people did at the dedication of their idols.

Hall, in his *Chronicle* of the time of Henry VIII., tells how the feast of May Day was sometimes accompanied by a kind of historical

pageant. This is from his description of a May Day in the seventh year of the reign of Henry VIII. :—

The King and Queen accompanied with many lordes and ladies rode in the high ground of Shooter's Hill to take the open air and as they passed by the way they espied a company of tall yeomen clothed all in green with green whodes and bows and arrowes to the number of two hundred. Then one of them which called himself Robin Hood came to the King, desiring him to see his men shoot, and the King was content. Then he whistled and all the two hundred archers shot and losed at once and then he whistled again and they likewise shot again, their arrows whistled by craft of the head, so that the noise was strange and great and much pleased the company. All these archers were of the King's guard and had thus apparelled themselves to make solace to the King. Then Robin Hood desired the King and Queen to come into the green wood and to see how the outlaws live. The King demanded of the Queen and her ladies if they durst venture to go into the wood with so many outlawes. Then the Queen said that if it pleased him she was content, then the horns blew till they came to the wood under Shooter's Hill, and there was an arbour made of bows with a hall and a great chamber and an inner chamber very well made and covered with flowers and herbes which the King much praised. Then said Robin Hood, Sir, outlaw's breakfast is venison and therefore you must be content with such fare as we use. Then the King and Queen sat down and were served with venison and wine by Robin Hood and his men. Then the King departed and his company and Robin Hood and his men them conducted.

I have spoken, so far, of "amusement" only. There are other forms of play. There is "sport." Now sport must not be considered an amusement merely in England. It is a vital absorbing affair of life, a "bemusement" rather. Some serious-minded folk in London still tell, with deprecation, of incidents of the time of the South African War, when the evening newspaper contents bills showed that there was a keener attraction for coppers in news of the cricket matches than in news of the campaign. But even these serious-minded people themselves probably have often bought a paper which recorded a century in a Test Match in preference to one which gave some news of national importance; and have murmured to themselves in excuse something that the dour old Duke of Wellington probably never said, about the Battle of Waterloo having been won on the playing fields of Eton.

"Sport," indeed, is so much a part of English life that it could never be uprooted without making some vital change in the national character—and, perhaps, not a change for the better.

One thing the passion for sport does give to the Englishman, and that is a passion for fair

play. There is not in any other nation of the world such a nice sense of manly honour. "Give him a sporting chance" means that you must take no unfair advantage of an enemy. "Take it like a sport" means that you must not be merely a cheerful winner, but must be ready to face losses and set-backs with equanimity.

When the small English boy goes to school the question is solemnly asked as to what sports he will take up. This is of at least equal importance with the other question as to what professional or business career he will follow in the future. Often it is counted of greater moment. Will the youngster be good at cricket, or football, or rowing? On that hinges the degree of his greatness in his world's estimation for quite a number of years. Cricket is, on the whole, the most important. To be a classic bat, to be a deadly slow bowler, or a still more deadly fast bowler—that is greatness for the young man. The cricket matches between the great public schools, the universities, the counties, are the chief pre-occupation of a large proportion of England during the summer months. Football grips more among the industrial classes, cricket more among the professional and administrative

classes. Between them they keep a great part of England excited from one year's end to the other.

There are, of course, other sports of the schools—running, jumping, lawn tennis, hockey and the like. But they usually are just allowed to fill in gaps between cricket and football. Manhood, however, adds to the list of sports largely. There is golf. “If you find that golf interferes with your business, give up your business,” runs a popular gibe. It accentuates, without misrepresenting acutely, the attitude taken up by very many Englishmen and Englishwomen on the subject of golf. They live in a district because of its golf facilities, shape their holiday resorts by the golf they offer, reckon their days by the chances they offer for golf.

Horse-racing is another great English sport, in which few take an active part, but in which a vast multitude has a share of interest either as spectators or as speculators. It claims such a huge share of English attention that one definition of the English is, “a horse-racing nation”; and wherever an English town is built in any part of the world it will have a race-course almost as soon as it has a church and a school. The various race-meetings throughout the year in

England vary in their social character. The Derby is a great popular event, to see which the East End of London pours itself out on the Surrey roads. Goodwood, on the other hand, is very much a "society" meeting.

The tale is not yet complete. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Englishmen find it necessary to life to disport on water during the summer—yachting, skiff-rowing, punting, or canoeing. Hunting is mostly the sport of the well-to-do, though an otter-hunt calls a whole country-side to its excitement, demanding of no one either that he should be mounted or that he should be rich.

Fox-hunting is of the very marrow of the English character. "The unspeakable pursuing the uneatable," said Wilde savagely of the English squire pursuing the fox; and thereby proved his utter un-Englishness. To sneer at fox-hunting! It is a step towards atheism. Once upon a time I remember going out into the yard of a little village public-house on the Monaro (Australia) and seeing chained up in the yard a fox. I stopped to ask why, and the groom told me of an English tourist who had also inquired as to the fox, and who had learned



TROUT-FISHING ON THE ITCHEN, HAMPSHIRE

incidentally that poison was laid for foxes on the Monaro because they had become a pest; and, so learning, had set his face at once away from a land where such barbarities were possible. He did not reckon his own life safe, I suppose, in a country where foxes were poisoned.

The pheasant *battues*, which are one of the autumn games of the rich in England, I would hardly dignify as "sport." They are the growth of the recent times of great fortunes, and scarcely a wholesome sign, I think. Grouse-shooting *en battue* is more tolerable as a sport, for at least the birds are wild-bred.

But one may not even catalogue all the sports of England in a chapter. I find that fishing—in all its phases: salmon, trout, deep-sea, and the rest—asks attention, and may not have it. One final note: the Englishman, for all his present sports, is hospitable to welcome others, and often takes them up to excel in them. In flying, for instance, the Englishman is beginning now to take a place after the French. And I can recollect, as late as the end of 1909, a Flying Meeting at Doncaster at which not a single Englishman took the air. Within a little more than two years what a change!

That Doncaster Flying Meeting was the first ever held in England, and I was one of those who travelled up to see the strange fowl in the air, birds of the growth of the fabled roc winging steady flights around the field once sacred to the horse. Badly treated by the weather, the "First Flying Meeting in England" faced an outlook which was not too cheerful. Over a sodden ground a grey sky lowered threateningly, and gusty winds, blowing hither and thither, threatened storms. The great "birds" nestled within their sheds, and a nervous committee went round lifting questioning hands to the sky. If this day were a fiasco the meeting was ruined, and the horses of Doncaster would have the laugh over their strange rivals.

Then the sun came out. The wind dropped to a zephyr's lightness. There seemed no reason why the men should not fly, and they could fly. Whispers went round hinting at delays which were condemnable because avoidable if they were real. An official suggested that aviators had all the tricks and uncertainties of the indispensable *prima donna assoluta*; that they had to be humoured to take the stage when the call-bell rang. Devout prayers were muttered

for the day when aviation would be as common in England as trick-cycling and stout, bejewelled promoters of flying meetings would lounge haughtily in front of a long *queue* of humble applicants for a chance to appear, and country hotel-keepers would, with most particular care, exact payment in advance from poor "artists" in flying who, in the event of a bad season, had such inconvenient facilities for escaping without footing the score. That time has almost come in England to-day. But then in 1909 public and managers had to wait patiently on the gentlemen who had improved on Prometheus and, harnessing the fire that he stole from above, dared the assault of the very heavens.

Finally the flying did begin. But it was all by Frenchmen on French machines. There was the Blériot, aptly to be compared in shape to a dragon-fly; the Farman, a long box trailing a baby box in its wake. The Blériot suggests a successful wooing, the Farman a scientific conquest, of the air. The one soars and swoops and skims actually like a bird, the other progresses with scientific and mathematical precision. One might imagine a respectable barn-door fowl brood-mother, resting a while after the arduous

labours of the pheasant season, speculating dismally on the prospects of being called upon to hatch out a brood of aeroplanes, and resolving to accept with resignation a clutch of Blériots but to draw the line firmly at Farmans. No respectable fowl could give even the kinship of adoption to a flying contrivance that suggests so strongly a collection of egg-boxes.

Since then Englishmen have learned to fly, and aeroplaning is becoming one of the national sports. Also I see in some of the papers that because at the last Olympic Games England got more of the dust than of the laurels, the Englishman must set to work to learn to throw the javelin and the discus farther than any one else; and I believe that a section of him will accept the direction to do this and do it quite earnestly. So the Englishman who practises at football, cricket, hunting, sailing, rowing, fishing, running, walking, flying, shooting, must also learn to throw strange things great distances. Withal he has his work to do, and some time to give to the enjoyment of the beauty of his most beautiful England. A wonderful people of a wonderful country !

CHAPTER VII

THE CITIES OF ENGLAND

THERE are so many great cities and historic towns in England that a mere guide-book enumeration of the chief of them would fill many pages—in rather a dull fashion. I shall not attempt that, but will take the reader for a brief glance at some of the more notable centres of population.

In the beginning there is, of course, London—the capital of the world, the centre from which has sprung most of the great movements of the Christian era for the betterment of humanity, the magnet which draws to-day the best of the world's thought and energy. To have the best introduction to London I should like to think of the visitor coming upon it, as I did for the first time, in the “small hours” of a clear May morning. A drive through its streets then was

a sheer delight. Hushed they were and solemn, the torrents of trade stilled for a few hours. But the soul of London was awake, though its busy material life for a brief time was asleep. The great grey old city was peopled with ghosts. Through the empty streets paced London's great men since Cæsar, some native and to the land born, others foreign, finding in England hospitality whether they came as poor refugees or as noble visitors. From the houses walked out memories and traditions in spectral hordes. The buildings themselves, mostly of the white freestone of Bath, which with London smoke becomes a dull black, and then with London showers learns to show here and there a patch of ghostly white, lent themselves to the fancy of a city of dreams. The architecture was disembodied, and floated in the air; the shadows of venerable churches and institutions were a background to shadows of great men and noble women.

In time I came in front of the Houses of Parliament, the shrine of representative government. Yonder, looming high in the pale early morning light, was the Nelson Monument, and stretching from it the Strand, leading to Fleet

Street, whence issued the first newspapers of European civilisation. Near by Westminster Abbey lifted its grey fane in praise and prayer. This indeed seemed the very centre and capital of the world.

If you cannot so enter London for the first time, when its busy traffic is hushed, and the first pale glow of a spring dawn is in the sky, be heedful that some night you will give up thoughts of your couch to taste that joy. Wander then down Pall Mall, home of magnificent clubs, after the last late reveller has been taken to his cab, past the National Gallery, the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (a wondrous beautiful church by moonlight or first-dawn light), through Trafalgar Square, and along the Strand to Wellington Street. Cross the Thames by Waterloo Bridge, turning a blind eye to the electric signs that are now allowed to disfigure the south river front, and see the great sweep, right and left, of the Thames Embankment, and then look up in the sky to see the dome of St. Paul's afloat there. Recrossing the bridge, go to the left until Westminster Bridge is reached, and look there for the Houses of Parliament and, a little away from the river, the Abbey of West-

minster. Then turn into Bird-Cage Walk by the side of St. James's Park and cross that park by the only path open at night, which will take you across the lake by a little footbridge. From the middle of that footbridge, looking towards the Horse Guards, there is, by night, a view as poetic as any that Venice can show : of the still lake fringed with woods, and—apparently rising up from its very marge—the Horse Guards, and the palaces which shelter the officials of the great public departments.

Most of London is beautiful at any hour. All of it, even to the most sordid parts, is beautiful at the fall of evening or the first glance of the morning. And there is always intruding into the commonplace of the twentieth century some touch of ancientry, some hint of romance. I can recall once finding a note of beauty in that least likely of all places, London Dock. It was an autumn dawn so grey and chill that the pungent smell of a cargo of pepper from one of the wharves brought a welcome sense of warmth. I was wandering about aimlessly when, in a dirty little basin of muddy water in the Wapping corner of the docks, I suddenly came upon a white swan swimming with placid disregard of its



DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER

utter incongruousness there. In the grey morning, in that grey water, surrounded by the murk of industrialism at its ugliest, the white swan was as startling as a ghost. When, as I looked upon it, the air was suddenly pierced by the crisp, urgent note of a bugle calling the *réveillé*, I felt sure for a moment that this was an uneasy dream bringing into the sordid grey of life a thread of white and silver from the days of jousts and pageantry. But no, the swan was real enough; the mystery of the bugle-call was that the docks were under the shadow of the Tower of London, which relieves with its splendidly preserved Norman keep a busy quarter of London from architectural dullness.

But the chief charm of London is, without a doubt, its parks and open places, of which there are some three hundred. Indeed, of the total area of London a full tenth is park land, and the civic authorities are adding to the park area, not lessening it.

Nothing that one could say would exaggerate the beauty of these parks in spring and summer. The grass lawns—delicately smooth, of a glowing green that seems to be suffused with light and starred with little white daisies, suggest a bright

firmament, the emerald sky of a fairy tale with daisies to make its Milky Way. The trees are full of their own rustling song and of the clear soprano notes of crowding birds. The flower-beds flaunt a constantly changing bravery of colour. All the plants are bedded out in full bloom. The cost must be enormous, but the Londoner pays it cheerfully, and these city parks provide the people with gayer gardens than have any of the great nobles.

For the gardens are the people's. On the dainty grass the children of the poor sprawl and play contentedly. In the ponds and streamlets, beside which, in the old days, kings sauntered, the youngsters of the slums fish with bent pins or scoop with small nets for small fish. The rangers are the friends of the people, and will help a little kiddie to a patch where daisies may be picked for daisy-chains. The trees are all a-twitter with songsters. In the ponds and streams a gorgeous variety of water-fowl display themselves—giant white pelicans, filled with a smug and hypocritical satisfaction at the mistaken reputation they have won for benevolence; black swans from Australia and white swans of this country; all manner of ducks and geese



SAILING BOATS ON THE SERPENTINE, HYDE PARK, LONDON

and teal. Children bring crumbs and feed these birds, and also the pigeons, which in consequence reach a bloated size and can hardly waddle out of the way of the horsemen who canter along the soft tracks laid out for cavaliers in Hyde Park.

The aloofness from the city's turmoil of the London parks is wonderful. Matthew Arnold noted it in Kensington Gardens :—

In this lone, open glade I lie,
Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand ;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees stand !

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is !
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come !

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy ;
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here !
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass !
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

The art of designing city parks of this kind seems to be exclusively English. In other parts of the world there are magnificent parks, but

nowhere the little bit of woodland planted in the heart of a city.

Though London is the greatest industrial city of the world, it does not succeed in being sordid-looking or mean. But the Midlands—where are the new great manufacturing cities—are frankly horrible, grimy city following grimy city, the pavements seeming never to end, the suburbs of one town stretching out lank arms to greet those of another.

When rain sets in, the sordidness of these towns is complete. Thickly growing chimneys take the place of trees, and from the tops of their great harsh trunks float thin wisps of black foliage. The streets are of a miserable muddiness which bemires without softening the hardness of the pavements. Through the smoky, dirty, wet air pallid faces loom. The very meat in the shops has no red wholesomeness, but looks pallid and anæmic; that, I suppose, is really due to the fact that the Midlands so largely eat pork, but it pleases me to imagine that the inanimate stuff also feels the depression of this smoke-palled district and knows not the red of life.

But much of the evil is curable. Sheffield is a

brighter, more sunny town than most in the Midlands because its authorities insist on something being done to mitigate the smoke nuisance. In most of the other towns factory and workshop can pour out unchecked their defiling streams, poisoning the air and darkening the sky so that the birds leave the district in despair, and no green thing flourishes and men grow pale and unwholesome. Now that is being changed, and the Midland cities are beginning to claim their share of the heritage of English beauty.

Away from the actual new manufacturing towns there are none without some beauty. Durham in the north perches grandly on its river, and the river-front shows off well the impressive Cathedral. York, with its famous Minster, has been already noted in another chapter. To Stratford-on-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare, all visitors to England go, but some English people are beginning to resent the commercial spirit which makes it purely a "show" town, with fees payable for this and that at every turn.

A town not too "hackneyed" but full of historical interest is St. Albans, the Verulam of the Romans, with its fine Abbey Church

overlooking hill and field. The path past that church was a wide-paved Roman road once, and by the vicarage foundations of Roman chambers and mosaics are found. Some two thousand years ago St. Albans was a stronghold of the Britons, protected naturally on two sides by marsh and river; adding to those natural defences an artificial ditch, earthworks, and a palisade. It had to stand an onslaught of the Roman invaders, and, of course, fell. Before that Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, had laid the town waste—Boadicea of whom Cowper sang:—

When the British warrior Queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods.

Poor Boadicea: if she suffered all that is said, “an indignant mien” would seem to be a weak description of her state of mind; but a rhyme was necessary. This more or less historical Amazon of early Britain has now a statue to her memory on Westminster Bridge. (And, by the way, London has yet to learn—and might learn from Paris—how to utilise the artistic possibilities of bridges.)

But to return to St. Albans. The Watling



WATERGATE STREET, CHESTER

Street of the Romans from London to Chester ran through this town. After the departure of the Roman legions, St. Albans suffered a long siege at the hands of the Anglo-Saxon invaders. Sacked and left in ruins it became a stronghold for outlaws. Then the Church came with holy balm, and the foundation of a monastery gave St. Albans peace.

Chester, where the Watling Street of the Romans ended, is to-day one of the most picturesque of English cities. Its old timbered houses and arcaded streets give it a mediæval air, which is jealously preserved in all restoration work. Bath is another city of Roman antiquity. Portions of the Roman baths still exist there, and the existence of a great modern spa shows that the doctors of to-day endorse the opinion of their colleagues of the days of Cæsar. Apart from its medicinal waters, Bath is a very beautiful town, the architectural treatment of its hill-sides being most effective. In an earlier century it was a great resort of fashion, and there reigned Beau Nash, the Exquisite. To-day Bath is less popular, but not less deserving of favour, and an effort is being made to restore its old glories. Winchester, another Roman town, an

old capital of the kingdom, and the reputed capital of King Arthur, where the "curfew bell" still rings, should be among the first three of the cities of England visited. From there it would be well to go west to ramble through Plymouth, a naval port full of memories of Francis Drake and other gallants of the glorious Elizabethan days. Bristol then claims a day; also Rochester, which has the second oldest cathedral in England, and which has a new source of interest in that it is emphatically, after London, the Dickens city. Canterbury should have more than a day, for it is a link between Briton England and Roman England, and then between Briton England and Saxon England. (Between Dover and Canterbury was the first line of resistance to the Roman invaders, and again to the Saxon invaders.) There Bertha, the first Christian Queen of Kent, worshipped in the little Church of St. Michael. There St. Augustine christened Ethelbert of Kent, founded a monastery, ordained a bishop (1300 years ago), and set the foundations of the first Christian cathedral in England. There, too, À Becket shed his blood; and there is the shrine of the Black Prince.

Salisbury, with its cathedral, must not be missed. It was a great fortified town once, and Pepys records in his Diary :—

So over the plain by sight of the steeple to Salisbury by night ; but before I came to the town, I saw a great fortification, and alighted, and to it, and in it, and find it so prodigious so as to fright me to be in it all alone at that time of night, it being dark. I understand since it to be that that is called Old Sarum.

The remains of Old Sarum are the fragments of a great feudal castle and keep. It was these ruined walls and yawning ditches which sent two members to Parliament until the Reform Act of 1832. To the present day Salisbury is a central point in the military defences of England, the chief training-grounds for troops being at Salisbury Plain.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RIVERS OF ENGLAND

THERE is no spot in England more than sixty miles away from the sea as the crow flies. So the land gives no room for great river systems. But the larger rivers are navigable to a more than ordinary degree, because they run their courses gently. Reinforcing the rivers are hundreds of charming streams. By the side of these rivers and streams is to be found the most charming scenery of the English countryside.

A typical English stream takes its course—shallow at the outset, deepening its bed as it nears the sea—through meadows which bring their green to the very edge of its sparkling water, past trees which take the caress of the water with their roots and give it back in kisses from their leafy branches. Rarely does the



THE RIVER ROTHER, SUSSEX

English stream have a ravine to pass through : generally the ravine has been softened to a gentle valley, with a wooded hill rising steeply on one side, a marshy meadow stretching away on the other. These marshes are flecked in proper season with most beautiful golden and blue and purple flowers, and fringed with handsome sedges. When it is meadow-land that meets the river there are buttercups and daisies and daffodils, and, at the very edge, forget-me-nots, as if to be remembrancers from the land to the water stealing away to the sea, to come back again on the chariots of the clouds. When a hill-side is passed, its woods will throw their cool shadows into the river ; or perhaps a rough stony hill will reflect in summer the colour of the heather, purple like spilt wine on the ground ; and, at almost all seasons, a touch of gold shows from the gorse, which is of such a glad nature that it must blossom a little almost all the year round, so that they say : “ When the gorse is not in flower girls do not like to be kissed.”

I have found joy by the side of many English rivers, from the wilder—and yet only a little wild, though they seem torrents by the side of most of their quiet, silent brothers of the south—streams

of Yorkshire to the gently-stealing rivulets of Kent, and it would be a puzzle to say which English river is the most charming until one remembers the Thames, in which can be found an epitome of all river delight, from its estuary all along its winding course past London, Richmond, Hampton, Windsor, Maidenhead, Henley, Goring, Didcot, Oxford, and beyond Oxford until it turns south and south-west to find its source under the hills which bound the valley of the Avon. There is no joy of forest, or park, or lawn, or garden, or meadow that may not be had by the banks of the Thames; and those banks are decorated with more noble mansions and sweet homes than are the banks of any river in the world.

To watch in the valley of the Thames the oncoming of Spring is a pageant of dear delights. Dobell thus gives his impression of the Spring march of the flowers :—

First came the primrose
On the bank high,
Like a maiden looking forth
From the window of a tower
When the battle rolls below :
So looked she,
And saw the storms go by.

Then came the wind-flower,
In the valley left behind
As a wounded maiden, pale
With purple streaks of woe,
When the battle has roll'd by,
Wanders to and fro :
So totter'd she
Dishevell'd in the wind.

Then came the daisies
On the first of May,
Like a banner'd show's advance,
While the crowd runs by the way,
With ten thousand flowers about them they came troop-
ing through the fields,
As a happy people come,
When the war has roll'd away,
With dance and tabor, pipe and drum,
And all make holiday.

On a Spring day let us go out from London to do honour to the Thames, seeking its nearer delights. Because it is Spring the day is delightful. The English seasons are often disappointing. The summer is not as good, winter not as bad as one has had reason to anticipate. One often at the end of the year has neither revelled in a fine summer nor felt the happiness of heroism in enduring a rigorous winter ; for there has been no spell of really fine weather and no rigours. Always the climate has been soft and apologetic. But Spring in England is ever

delicious. The first awakening of the year is brimful of stirring delights. Perhaps the summer has been "unsatisfactory," one of these cold, damp summers which drift unaware into autumn; and autumn, though providing a few perfect days, has been generally overcast, and every day has threatened the winter. But the winter has never come at all in any real earnest. No snow, no big freeze for skating, just dull half-cold days with occasional hours as warm as though stolen from autumn. Nature goes to sleep grudgingly, but goes to sleep; taking off all her draperies of green and brown and gold.

Then suddenly one morning you may see the crocus running like a trail of fire through the grass; and around all the shrubs and bushes steals a luminous mist of verdancy which, the more nearly approached, resolves into a starry way of little budding leaves of pale angelic green, so pale and pure that they were surely sprinkled from heaven in the night, and had not been drawn from the gross soil beneath. Yes, Spring is beautiful, and there is the stimulating note in its beauty which is so often lacking in the English landscape. Much of bright serene content, much



THE THAMES AT RICHMOND, SURREY

of reverend grace, much of misty and soft charm with a note of wistfulness, almost of melancholy, England may show through the summer, the autumn, and the winter. On an odd day she will deck herself almost in gaiety, but there is ever a Puritan note of reserve, a hint of grey hairs. In early Spring, however, the country is all young in spirit. One might almost forget decorum and be rash, and whoop out one's joy aloud, coming thus under suspicion of being an uncontrollable Latin sort of person.

It is probably in part what has gone before that makes the Spring so glorious. It is a resurrection. With the chill breath of November most of the trees in England prepare to hibernate, shedding their leaves and withdrawing their life within their grim-looking trunks. In the quiet stillness everything snuggles down to rest, and week after week, month after month, you become accustomed to seeing Nature asleep. Then of a sudden a south wind comes bearing the notes of the *réveillé*, and everything is deliciously athrill, and it is Spring; and as you look upon the *feu de joie* of the crocuses in the grass, you understand the exultation in Horace's lines about his Spring on the Tiber:—

*Solvitur acris hiemps grata vice veris et Favoni,
Trahuntque siccas machinae carinas,
Ac neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus aut arator igni,
Nec prata canis albicant pruinis.*

And if you are wise you too prepare to drag down a dry keel to the waters of the Thames. Not at the first note of the crocuses must you do so, unless you are greatly daring, for the Spring sends out her heralds to walk some distance before her steps ; and there may be biting winds and nipping frosts yet. But the message is sure. Soon the daffodils will be dancing, demure and stately in the grass ; the trees will be alive with their intensely young green ; daisies and cowslips will be waking to deck the meadows.

Take the rapture of the river little by little. Richmond and Kew—Kew Gardens at daffodil time are exquisite—should give you new joys for many days. The gentle march of the crocus, of the daffodil, and the narcissus, and the rhododendron, and the azalea at Kew, the gradual filling up of the great valley which stretches below Richmond Hill, with colour and light and warmth,—these are not to be seen in an hour or a day, but call for many visits. If an occasional day of fog and mist obtrudes from out of winter, and you are resolved, nevertheless, to worship



SPRING BY THE THAMES

at the shrines of Father Thames, explore the reach from Chelsea to Greenwich, and learn what magic the mist can lend to drape all that is harsh, to bring out all that is fine, in the works of man.

As the Spring ripens, carrying your exploration of the Thames farther, go to Hampton Court, built by the great Cardinal who was too great to be pleasing to the arrogant temper of King Henry VIII. They tell that it was Wolsey's love of good Latin that first set the jealous temper of the King aflame. "Ego et rex meus," the Cardinal had written to a correspondent. To be correct in his Latin he could have done nothing else. The poorest beggar in Rome would say, and would write—if he knew how to write—"Ego et Julius Caesar," for the Romans were not hypocrites enough to pretend that any man does not think himself as of the first importance to himself. Our modern way of pretending to be humble and "putting oneself second," the Romans knew nothing of; and their language made no provision for it. Wolsey wrote good Latin; and in time he came to lose the favour of the King, and with it this fine palace of Hampton Court, set like a great pink flower in the midst of its gardens by the Thames side. Hampton

Court was a royal palace for some generations after, then it was given up to the people for their common enjoyment, and is now a show-place open to all. Its gardens are kept with the old care and generosity. In Spring the parterres of tulips and hyacinths and wallflowers and other blossoms suggest the dreams of all the great pottery decorators of every age come to life in flowers.

Not only the gardens of Hampton Court but also the state rooms of the palace are open to the public, including the great hall which ought to be called Blue Beard's Hall, because of its series of stained-glass windows picturing Henry VIII. and all his wives. Do they of nights climb down from their windows and trip a measure together?

After Hampton Court the Thames winds past Staines to Eton and Windsor. The great castle, which is the chief residence of the British Court, has no longer in these days of widely-ranging artillery any purpose of guardianship. But one can see that at the time of its building it was well designed to stand siege and assault, and to hold the passage of the Thames. From Windsor spreads one of the royal forests, and the valley of the Thames is now for a long stretch

well wooded. At Bourne End begins definitely the long series of little pleasure houses—afloat or ashore—which mark the Thames with a gay note for some miles up and down from Henley. In the summer these house-boats and bungalows, painted always in glowing colours, decked out with bright flowers, sheltering brightly-dressed people, are as gay as gay can be. The Englishman is a little serious in his pleasures some think; “on the river” he is usually hilarious. On Sundays and holidays in summer the dwellers by the river are reinforced by thousands of trippers from London. There are musical comedy stars and their swains who have motored down, and will dawdle in a punt or a skiff—also sometimes in a motor launch or a steam-boat—mainly as an exercise before and after a massive lunch. There are visitors from the theatres who are not stars, and shop girls, and typewriting girls, and sporty girls—all, or nearly all, with men to match. Also there is a slight flavour of plain 'Arriett with her 'Arry, though she favours more the reaches of the river near to London.

Between them all they make the Thames very very gay. Some sing or play banjos. Many bring phonographs and gramophones, which

will give canned music at the call of the merest fraction of skill and effort. All are dressed in bright colours, and not too much dressed at that. It is the very lightest side of London life, that "on the river" of a summer Sunday; and over it all great quiet woods brood, and some of the sweetest church bells in Christendom send out their silver summons; and past all Father Thames glides quietly, making his way from the Western Hills to the sea, tolerant of all, with a smile of sweetness for all.

But who may tell of the full delights of the Thames? We must be content here with the mere glimpse at the life of this one river of England, and leave out any description of other streams, whose very names are sweet and cool, or cheerful and exhilarating, or gentle and peaceful. What poetic syllables these rivers have won for their names—the Severn, the Darent, the Avon, the Wye, the Dove, the Eden, the Dart, the Tamar, the Lynn, the Arun, the Ouse, the Rother, the Medway, the Trent, the Erme! And how sweetly English all the names are! No hotch-potch here of dog Latin and Levantine Greek, but plain straight English, cool and fresh in the mouth.



WINDSOR CASTLE FROM FELLOWS' EYOT : EARLY SPRING

CHAPTER IX

ENGLAND'S SHRINES

THOSE places in England which are notable by their association with some great event of human history are very many in number. Knowledge of them is more complete with visitors to the land than with residents. The Englishman, for all his reverent love of the medieval life and customs of his country, has not the habit of cataloguing historic places, nor of visiting them of set purpose. Of late, because of the new interest in history given by the pageant movement, because of the work of various historical and archæological societies, because also of the care which some public bodies are giving to the identification and plain marking of famous birth-places and residences, the Englishman has become something of a tourist in his own country. He even shows a disposition to add to his treasures

of history—as in the tentative movement now afoot to ask from France the ashes of the Plantagenet kings buried there (a movement, by the way, accompanied by an honest give-and-take spirit; a famous Russian bell taken from a Baltic monastery during the Crimean War has just been restored). But still the famous places of England are mostly for the visitor, and that visitor can often take the Englishman to many places of note, before unknown to him, in his own land.

But not the most business-like and industrious of visitors could hope to compass within a lifetime a pilgrimage to all the shrines of England. He would be wise, therefore, to determine at the outset what is the side of human activity which most appeals to him—the struggle for religious liberty and tolerance, the fight for the freedom of the Press, the upgrowth of the greatest literature in any modern tongue, the development of the parliamentary and representative system of government, the shaping of the material power of a great Imperial race. Of any one of these he will find countless monuments in England. The whole country is a sepulchre of great men and a memorial of great deeds.

If that most strange, and in some of its aspects rather sordid, miracle of modern civilisation, the Newspaper Press, interests the pilgrim to England, let him betake himself to London, where in Fleet Street practically all the history of the beginnings of journalism has centred. All the world has newspapers nowadays—one of my own earliest memories of adult life was an invitation to edit a paper at Bangkok in Siam. There are mighty organs of public opinion at Fiji, Honolulu; and, though I have not yet heard of a paper published in Thibet, there must surely be one in print by now. But England saw the birth of journalism in its modern sense, saw the first beginnings of that eager hound which dogs the footsteps of civilisation day by day and night by night, rending aside every veil, “making” news for itself when the supply of murders and wars and scandals runs short, devouring whole forests day by day in its appetite for paper. Those old Pressmen of Fleet Street had probably no prophetic vision of the present-day newspaper when they were seized with the idea that the gossipy news-letters with which town mice amused country mice should be combined with the thundering

pamphlets which used the printing-press to campaign against tyrants of State, of Church, of privilege. If they had had, would they have fought their hard fight for the freedom of the Press? I often wonder, holding as I do that there is a good deal of truth in what Balzac wrote of the modern Press in *Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris* :—

Journalism comes first to be a party weapon, and then a commercial speculation, carried on without conscience or scruple, like other commercial speculations. . . . A newspaper is not supposed to enlighten its readers, but to supply them with congenial opinions. . . . Napoleon's sublime aphorism, suggested by his study of the Convention, "No one individual is responsible for a crime committed collectively," sums up the whole significance of a phenomenon, moral or immoral, whichever you please. However shamefully a newspaper may behave, the disgrace attaches to no one person. . . . We shall see newspapers, started in the first instance by men of honour, falling sooner or later into the hands of men of abilities even lower than the average, but endowed with the resistance and flexibility of indiarubber, qualities denied to noble genius; nay, perhaps the future newspaper proprietor will be the tradesman with the capital sufficient to buy venal pens.

But that is away from the question. In itself the fight for the freedom of the Press was



GLASTONBURY ABBEY, SOMERSETSHIRE

Walter Topdale

a good fight, and London was its campaign ground, and within the precincts of Fleet Street are all its memorials.

If religious progress and development is of special interest to him the student of England will first visit Canterbury, because of its association with St. Augustine, Lanfranc, and Saint Thomas à Becket. It is still the seat of the Primate of the Church of England. From Canterbury he might well follow the old "Pilgrims' Way," which runs through Kent, Surrey, and Hampshire towards Southampton, a much-favoured ancient port of communication with the Continent. At Southampton landed many a company of holy palmers from Europe to walk their devout way to the tomb of À Becket. On the way from Canterbury, through Kent, near Shoreham (the inland village, not the seaside Shoreham), will be found the ruins of two castles connected with the story of his sad murder. Then a student of Church history might go to Worcester, the scene of the first Church Congress in England, that which attempted to settle the differences between the Church in England and the Church in Wales. At Worcester, too, died Prince Arthur, a death of great moment in

Church history. If he had lived (a pious young man he was, and much beloved of the monks), then a certain Henry, who afterwards became Henry VIII., would never have been King of England, never have married his deceased brother's widow, never have had an uneasy conscience as that lady's charms were supplanted in his impressionable heart by a younger damosel, never have had his quarrel with the Pope ; and the whole course of history would have been, perhaps, different. But Prince Arthur died at Worcester, and events moved to their appointed end.

Then a visit to Glastonbury in Somersetshire must be made, site of the famous old abbey now being excavated and in a measure restored. There lived St. Dunstan of august memory. So much is certain ; but legend would bring to Glastonbury even greater claims to reverence if legend had its way. There, tradition says, King Arthur was buried. To probe the truth of this tradition excavations were made in the reign of Henry II., and beneath the old foundations and seven feet beneath the surface, according to Giraldus Cambrensis, was found a broad stone bearing the name of Arthur ; yet nine feet lower

was found the body of Arthur, enclosed in the trunk of a tree, and beside him the body of Guinevere. The King's skeleton, says the chronicler, was of extraordinary size, and the skull was covered with wounds; the body of Guinevere was well preserved, and the colour of her hair was of that burnished gold which ensnared more than one devout knight to be her lover.

Yet with all that honour Glastonbury is not content, and will have it that on its soil was erected the oldest Christian Church in England, by no less renowned a man than St. Joseph of Arimathea, who brought to his Glastonbury Church the Holy Grail, the cup from which the Divine Redeemer drank at the Last Supper.

Canterbury, Worcester, Glastonbury and York (of which something was said in a previous chapter) visited, the lover of Church history will then turn to London to do reverence to Westminster Abbey, one of the most sacred fanes of Christendom. There is a legend of the Abbey having been consecrated by St. Peter himself, a legend which Matthew Arnold incorporates in one of his poems. Some Thames fishermen are making for home on a winter's eve; one lags behind—

His mates are gone, and he
 For mist can scarcely see
 A strange wayfarer coming to his side—
 Who bade him loose his boat, and fix his oar,
 And row him straightway to the further shore,
 And wait while he did there a space abide.
 The fisher awed obeys,
 That voice had note so clear of sweet command ;
 Through pouring tide he pulls, and drizzling haze,
 And sets his freight ashore on Thorney strand.

The Minster's outlined mass
 Rose dim from the morass,
 And thitherward the stranger took his way.
 Lo, on a sudden all the pile is bright !
 Nave, choir, and transept glorified with light,
 While tongues of fire on coign and carving play !
 And heavenly odours fair
 Come streaming with the floods of glory in,
 And carols float along the happy air,
 As if the reign of joy did now begin.

Then all again is dark ;
 And by the fisher's bark
 The unknown passenger returning stands.
 " O Saxon fisher ! thou hast had with thee
 The fisher from the lake of Galilee—"
 So saith he, blessing him with outspread hands ;
 Then fades, but speaks the while ;
 " At dawn thou to King Serbert shalt relate
 How his St. Peter's Church in Thorney Isle
 Peter, his friend, with light did consecrate."

That is legend. Keeping strictly within the limits of ascertained history, the story of Westminster Abbey and its monuments is a brief

epitome of the records of England and of the British Empire. It is the burial-place of the mighty dead of the nation, and has been associated in some particular way with almost every great event since the Norman invasion. I shall not attempt here any description of the Abbey or any detailed discussion of its monuments. Many books have been written about this building, and the subject does not seem yet to have been exhausted. One monument, and one alone, I shall mention. In the summer of 1296 King Edward seized the regalia of Scotland, and offered them the following year to the shrine of St. Edward at Westminster. The objects which are known to have been offered by him are the golden sceptre, the golden crown with the apple or orb of silver gilt, and the golden rose, all of which were affixed to the shrine, and a "pallium" (probably the royal mantle of the King of Scotland), which was hung somewhere in the Abbey.

At or near the same time the "Coronation Stone," which also had been ravished from Scotland, found a home in the Abbey, and is still cherished as indispensable for the coronation of monarchs of the United Kingdom. In Celtic days a stone seemed essential for a king's coronation (the

“Coronation Stone” at Kingston-on-Thames is supposed to mark the site of an old place of investiture of British kings). This coronation stone taken from Scotland is said to carry with it the governance of that country; and legend has invested it with a mythical sanctity. According to some tales the stone was the pillow on which the patriarch Jacob rested his head at Bethel. Gathelus, who married Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh, brought it to Spain, where it became the stone on which the kings of Spain “of Scottish race” were wont to sit. Simon Breck, a descendant of Gathelus, brought it from Spain to Ireland, and was crowned upon it as king of that country at Tara, where it became known as the Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny. Afterwards the stone was removed to Dunstaffnage, where twenty-eight of the “forty kings” of Scotland were crowned. From Dunstaffnage it was taken to Scone. There it remained, and on it every Scottish monarch was inaugurated till the year 1296. Then it came to England to be used at the coronation of British monarchs to the latest, George V.

It is not necessary to invest the stone with the reverence that a belief in all these wonders

would call for ; but it is undoubtedly a monument of Celtic faiths and ceremonies, even if its biblical origin must be granted the Scottish verdict of " not proven."

To pass from Westminster Abbey to St. Paul's would be to enter upon a path leading away from the purpose of this chapter, which cannot attempt to be comprehensive. Let us suppose the Churchman pilgrim satisfied with pilgrimages to Glastonbury, Canterbury, Worcester, and Westminster. The political pilgrim has next to be considered. He will find hardly a part of England without its close association with the struggles for parliamentary freedom. But Buckinghamshire, which seemed always to be a county with a sturdy " no " in its composition, will give enough monuments of the great " Parliamentarians " of the Revolution—Hampden, Cromwell, Milton and the rest. It has also a modern association with a prominent man of modern times, who was very much on " the other side " in politics, Disraeli, the apostle of the new Conservatism. From Buckinghamshire the man who would wish to follow in memory the great contest between King and Parliament which made the British Constitution

would probably best go on to Worcestershire, which put up some stout battles for the King. And, of course, London cannot be neglected. Indeed, in all great English movements London had a leading part, for it was always in a very true sense the capital of the kingdom; and not a narrow and exclusive capital at that, but regularly sending out its "cits" to spy out the joys of the country, and just as regularly attracting to itself in season the rustics to taste the life of the town.

For literary monuments and associations London, of course, is the one great centre, though there should be reverent excursions to Oxford and Cambridge, and Bath, and then to Worcester, where the first of Anglo-Saxon poets wrote, and to the Lakes, which had their school of poets. But the student of England's monuments and shrines who has but a little time to give up to the study had best content himself with London. Within a full year he cannot exhaust its treasures.



WARWICKSHIRE COTTAGES AND GARDEN

CHAPTER X

THE POORER POPULATION

A DOMINANT note of the English character is kindness. Animals are treated in England better than anywhere else in the world; the ordinary sleekness of the English horse and the serene confidence in human nature of the London cat are two outward and visible signs of the absence of cruelty in the national character. This kindness makes more tolerable, and softens considerably what would be otherwise the intolerable gulf between rich and poor. England, taking into consideration population and area, is the richest country in the world, I suppose; yet it has a proportion of its population sunk in poverty—"the submerged tenth" one social observer (making a rather pessimistic calculation) called them. English statesmanship has so far failed to grapple successfully with the

pauper population, and the even more pitiful class which struggles grimly on the edge of pauperism ; but the English kindliness attempts to mollify the situation with vast organised charities, private and public, and makes it just tolerable. But even so it is painful : yet has to be faced to get to a true picture of England.

I spent the late months of autumn one year in looking into the case of the unemployed and the casual workers ; tramping the north country with them and following them then on their pilgrimage to London. With the first hint of winter the unemployed or the casual worker who knows the rules of the game heads for London. In the summer and the autumn he has wandered the countryside, working more or less regularly as he tramped, in potato fields, turnip fields, hop gardens, cornfields.

It is a steadily narrowing opportunity, this casual agricultural work. With each year more and more of England's fruit, hops, vegetables, roots, and corn are grown abroad. To some extent, also, labour-saving machinery is displacing the manual worker where the tillage of the soil still survives. But there is surprisingly little machinery used in British agriculture as

compared with that of Canada, the United States, and Australia. The very small farms do not allow of the economical use of machines. Some crops are still cut by scythes ; a reaper and binder is less common than the simple reaper which cuts the corn and leaves it to be gathered and tied by a harvest hand.

It is astonishing how close the agricultural land comes to London. One may see, within half a mile of Hampstead "tube," odd hayfields, and after leaving the Midlands, approaching London from the north, the pall of smoke lifts and the heavens appear as a broad belt of agricultural land intervenes. It would seem as if the traveller were passing away from, not approaching, the great industrial centre. Leaving Luton and coming through to St. Albans the country smiles in green pleasantness within sight and sound, almost, of London. Birds see the sky and rejoice. Hayricks warm the landscape with their golden yellow, and over the stubble fields sturdy plough-horses pass and repass, painting the fields with broad brush strokes a rich chocolate brown. The hedges in the autumn are glowing with berries—blackberries and the scarlet spots of the hawthorn berry. With close search even hazel-

nuts can be found, and this within the area tapped by London motor-buses and trams.

Sometimes the nuts and the berries give some sort of temporary relief to the casual worker. I remember one typical man of the "submerged tenth" who was making a harvest of the berries. He was a poor old tramp, hobbling along quickly in spite of the stiffness of rheumatism. He had a can to fill with what he gleaned from the hedges. He hoped, he told me, to get a shilling for the berries at the next town. His age was sixty-six, and he had been in his young prime a navvy and road labourer. Now he was past all hope of further employment as a labourer, and navvying work was impossible. Proudly he boasted that he had never been "in trouble," and had never actually begged, though in the main he lived on charity. His winters, it seems, were spent in the workhouses. With the coming of the spring he turned his face towards the green fields, and lived somehow through the summer on what he could pick up as the reward of doing odd jobs or as the dole of charity. He was one of a class I found common enough on the roads, past all steady and useful work, going with crippled gait steadily to the end.

The same day I encountered, among other wayfarers, a man who suggested this old and desolate tramp in the making. He was a young, vigorous, and capable fellow, civil, intelligent, and eager for work. He had walked from Manchester, having been on the road since the previous Sunday (the day was Saturday), and the golden goal at the end of his journey was a week's work at the Islington Agricultural Show, which had been promised to him. For the week he would get 30s. After the Islington Show he had the chance, perhaps, of getting another job in the same line. He followed agricultural shows around the country, for he understood cattle and horses.

Another type of the poor I met outside of Durham, plodding patiently along two miles out of the old cathedral city. He was something a little higher than a casual labourer, and had a "trade," if one might call it so : that of a porter. He was making out from Durham, where "things were very bad," to a country place, unspecified, where there was work.

A brave and cheerful soul he was. At the age of four his leg had been broken and badly set, and he had grown up a little lame. That was over forty years ago, when the poor had less

chance of good medical attention than now. The accident had frustrated the wish in him for an outdoor life. He confessed that all his thoughts turned to the soil, and while he was working in Durham as a casual porter he would in slack times always try to get out to the fields. He had never married; there was no hope of married life in his calling. He had tried to get a more steady sort of job as a painter, as an ironmonger's assistant; but his leg was against him. He had not a grumble in his whole composition, and talked cheerfully of the green grass and confided that he was forty-six. "But I don't look it a bit, do I?" I lied manfully that he did not seem more than thirty-five, though, poor, wizened little chap, I would have put him down at ten years above his age.

He was a patient little fighter, and had, with his lame leg, kept up somehow with the ranks of the workers, and had never begged a meal or a shilling in his life, and was, in a way, happy for all his frustrated longing for the open life of the country.

Out from Newcastle-on-Tyne another day of my tramp I picked up with a worker in the building trade. He was not a tramp, for he had

a house of his own and a wife of whose housewifery he was very proud. But he was unemployed, and had been for some months. That morning he had got up at five o'clock to tramp eight miles to a suburb of Newcastle in the hope of getting a place on a little church-repairing job employing three masons. He had not succeeded, and was tramping the eight miles back again. A penny fare on the tram would have saved him some two miles, but pennies were not to be spent lightly.

A homely, domestic man, typically English in his virtues and in the limitations of his virtues, was my mason friend. In the good times of the past he used to make 35s., 37s. 6d., and £2 : 1 : 6 a week at his trade, "steady work and constant." As a bachelor he found that all his money went as fast as he made it. After one long spell on £2 : 1 : 6 a week he had nothing at all left to tide over a week without work. That set his thoughts to matrimony and he "settled down." Since then his finances had been much more steady and prosperous. While he was in work he always paid his wife 30s. a week out of his wages, no more and no less. "He didn't come asking her for some of it back in the middle

of the week like some men did. Thirty shillings she had, regular, when he was in work, and she saved some of it." Whatever the balance was, 5s. or 7s. 6d. or 11s. 8d., was for himself. That was his pocket-money, and he spent it in a moderate and sensible roystering, and on other comforts of the manly life.

The virtues of his wife as a housekeeper he talked of sturdily. Such a thing as baker's bread—"nasty, unwholesome stuff"—was never seen in his house: it was all home-baked bread. Part of the secret of the housekeeping in unemployed times was perhaps the fact that they had two lodgers, who paid 3s. 6d. a week each for their quarters and paid for the "raw material" of their meals, having the food cooked free. I was interested to learn that 11½d. a week was charged to each of the lodgers for the flour used in his bread—not an extravagant weekly expenditure on that item of food.

A good average man this, not at all heroic, common-sensible, and strictly moderate in his virtues, keeping a very good margin of his wages for himself, but not poaching on the remainder. Probably the wife has much the harder life of the two, with her 30s. a week steady when the



THE VILLAGE OF AMBERLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

good man is in work, and nothing at all but the lodgers' money at other times ; probably, too, she is happy enough. May a change of fortune soon bring steady work !

Studied from the English country-side the life of the lowly appeared to me often pitiful but rarely abject. It was relieved from squalor by much heroic courage ; and by evidences of that beautiful love of the green fields which the English seem to have by nature. In London the position is more depressing, for there one encounters a vast army in which are mingled inextricably poor victims worthy of the fullest compassion, and cunning "wasters" who, finding it easy to live without work, are resolved not to work.

To the "professional unemployed," I believe, the autumn entry into London is a blessed relief. He knows all the charities which can be worked for food and shelter. He has put in his penitential period in the country to give a reasonable air to the tale that he has been in work, and prepares with zest to tap the old springs of alms. London promises him winter comfort, human companionship ; warm nights in shelters, when politics can be discussed and the state of the

nation learnedly argued; amusing tests of his skill in bamboozling charitable societies. To the genuine seeker for work a first impression of London must be terrifying. The place is so vast, so inchoate. It seems to suggest a great organised mass into which no newcomer can hope to penetrate.

The day I tramped in—on my mission of investigation—a thin rain filled the air with a blurring mist and made a horrible mud underfoot. My too realistic boots gave this mud entrance to my feet. The soft, suggy sound and feel of this mud making its way in and out was at once depressing and enraging. I cursed the weather, and London, and the resolution which had brought me on the enterprise. It seemed as if it would be just heaven to have clean feet, and stout soles between them and the loathsome dirt. I was wet through as regards clothes. That did not matter. The rain from above was clean except for a little soot. But this stuff beneath—faugh! If other men think and feel as I do, when you wish to “lift” a man out of the mire of hopelessness give him first a stout pair of boots.

The Spitalfields “doss” to which I had been

directed looked too much like the mud beneath felt. It was stale and dirty, from its ceiling to its floor; and all the air between was stale and dirty. The men steaming and smoking in the thick atmosphere were sympathetic to the place. I passed on. That dossery could be investigated another time, on some night when the streets were dry. At a "Rowton House" in White-chapel I found a clean and endurable lodging, paying ninepence for a night's lodging. There were good facilities to wash and to eat and to cook one's food, and a reading-room even. One could be, clearly, comfortable enough here—if one had the ninepence.

There are much cheaper lodging-houses, and one absolutely free one, Medland Hall, on the Ratcliff Highway near Stepney Station. I visited it one November evening at five o'clock. Under a railway arch there was drawn up a tattered regiment of men some 300 strong. Now and again a late-comer arrived and took his place in the rear rank. Two police officers attended to keep order, but in the men there seemed not enough energy left for disorder. Like a cluster of bats they hung, dark, inert, to that wall of the arch which gave some little shelter from the

driving rain. There was not one touch of colour in all the dark ranks. Each man seemed to be dressed like his fellows, in something that was black, either originally or made so from the struggle in the mud of life. It was a patient crowd. Now and again a harsh cough sounded from some man, and always he seemed to be trying to smother it, as if unwilling to break into the silence of the common misery ; or a lame man shuffled uneasily on his feet, and he also seemed ashamed a little of the noise.

At six, when the great bulk of the crowd had been waiting an hour (some of them probably much longer), the order was given to march, and the men filed into Medland Hall, each one getting as he entered a half-pound of bread with a little butter. That was his meal for the night, and, like his bed, it was absolutely free. The bed was a box on the floor, with a seaweed mattress and an oilskin covering.

Most of the men were young. Few of them had gone past the labouring age. Some were obviously tuberculous, others crippled with rheumatism. The gathering, too, had its castes. A man who had been once a chief clerk, and who still wore a "boxer" hat in place of the usual

cap of the unemployed, was the aristocrat of the doss.

This winter (1912) the London authorities, at last awake to the scandal of homeless men wandering or sleeping in the streets, have instituted a system by which the police will find shelter for all who are found without homes. But even that will not remove all the scandal.

For many years the charitable provision for the homeless in London has been ample, and I could not at first find an explanation for the Thames Embankment miserables who huddled on the seats throughout the nights and had their shivering sleep disturbed again and again by the police, or for the unfortunates who haunted "the Dark Arches" of the Strand and other places giving shelter from the rain. With the use of any intelligence at all, it seemed, a man could get shelter of a sort and food of a sort. Yet people, I know, did in rare cases actually perish from exposure and from hunger in London. Inquiring among the Embankment men, the unhappiest of all the miserable army, there seemed to be always one of two explanations for haunting the Embankment—either the desperate sense of shame of the man who has come down

from a position of some comfort and decency and shuns a shelter because it means a display of his misery ; or the dull lethargy that comes from extreme hardship and kills every suggestion of self-help.

One unemployed with whom I conversed, or tried to converse, at midnight just near the Temple Pier was sunk in such apathy that he, I verily believe, would not have walked 400 yards to get the most comfortable bed in London. At any rate, when I gave him a shilling he made no move away from his seat, showed, indeed, very little interest in the dole. His was an extreme case, but many seemed to be almost as dead to any idea of effort. " With the use of any intelligence " a man can get shelter—yes. But the man who is down often loses his intelligence as he sinks. The " cunning " unemployed, on the other hand, flourishes.

In China they have a term " rice Christians " for heathen who pretend conversion to Christianity in order to secure food from the missionaries. The cunning unemployed is usually a " rice " Anglican, or Roman Catholic or Wesleyan of the most fervent type. His religious views are strong to the point of bigotry. But should

he have a wife and household to maintain by the sweat of his brain it will often happen that, while he is a rice Anglican of the most uncompromising type, she is a rice Wesleyan or professor of some other type of Nonconformity.

For the man who has made a study of the art of living without work London offers a vast field. There are so many charities that by going the round it is possible to avoid all danger of becoming too familiar at any one of them, and since there is no effective safeguard against overlapping it is easy to be getting help from two or even more sources simultaneously.

This state of affairs, of course, does not help the genuine unemployed, the man who wants work and not charity. But it is a constant temptation to him to drop his self-respect and sink to the level of the men who, he finds, live just as comfortably without labour as he is able to do by steady industry.

The life of "toiling for leave to live," using up to-day for just as much reward as will allow you to be fit for work to-morrow—and that is the life of thousands—has, after all, not much attraction, considered dispassionately. The tramp in Mr. Wells's story who explained that

it was followed only by people who had been “pithed”—*i.e.* had had their brains extracted while at school—had some grim reasonableness in his fancifulness. When honest work offers a hope of progressive betterment the enthusiasm for it is natural. When, as for too many, honest work offers nothing but a subsistence fractionally better than that of the dishonest loafer it is surprising not that there are so many but so few of the “cunning unemployed.” Only a very strong innate sense of duty and self-respect can account for the fact that millions keep pressing desperately on in the ranks of the workers with no more real reward for their efforts than the pride that they have never been to the “workhouse” or taken alms from any one.

Recognising that, it is possible to come away from a study even of the “submerged tenth” in England with some cheerfulness. The mistakes of the past which have allowed that inundation of misery can be rectified, and, serious as those mistakes have been, they have left the character of the English people in the main sturdy and self-respecting. Of the “submerged tenth” I think only a tenth, *i.e.* one per cent of the total population, is actually hopeless and



THE TOWER FROM THE TOWER BRIDGE, LOOKING WEST

helpless. The others will respond to a wiser organisation of the national life offering more opportunity and less charity. On this point I have sought the views of several clergymen working in the East End, the poor quarter of London. They were all proud, and justifiably so, of the various efforts made to salve the lot of the poor—the university settlements, the hospitals, infirmaries, nursing associations, charitable and semi-charitable dormitories, the associations for the supply of food, clothing, coal, and the like. But not one, challenged to it, could truthfully claim that the sum of all this work was remedial in any real sense of the word. Not one of them could deny that most of it directly attacked the principle of self-reliance. The wretched were kept alive, and that was all. No future was opened out for the great majority of them, and very very rarely did any future mean useful citizenship of Great Britain, but rather the export of the young citizen to some other land in the hope that it would give him a chance.

Yet all agreed that as a matter of reasonable probability most of the men who are down could be saved and are worth saving. The proportion

that is absolutely hopeless was variously stated. It may be averaged, in their opinion, at 5 per cent. The other 95 per cent could be brought to useful lives, these clergymen who are close students of the matter agreed.

That leaves, in the opinion of the men who have made a life study of the subject, not my one per cent, but only one-half per cent of the total English population as hopelessly "down." It is a bad wastage when one thinks that every human creature is a temple of the Divine, but it is not so gloomy a position as most imagine. And it can, and it will be stopped.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARTS IN ENGLAND

THAT the English are an "inartistic" people, without true appreciation of pictures, music, the drama, is a statement commonly made and commonly accepted without any very serious examination of the evidence for and against. A just judge giving the benefit of a close and impartial inquiry to the case of Madam England, indicted for that she is a Philistine without any true taste in, or proper love of, the arts, would be able to go no further than the Scottish verdict of "not proven." But few of those people who find England guilty without leaving the box have attempted to make any sound examination of the evidence available. They have heard of a Hanoverian monarch of past days, who despised "boetry und bainting," and have come to a settled conviction that that represented the English mind then and represents it now.

Elsewhere I have maintained that a nation which has such a noble taste in parks and gardens as have the English must be “æsthetic” at heart; and “æsthetic” and “inartistic” are not compatible. But apart from Nature love and delight in gardening, there is a great deal of evidence to be cited in the Englishman’s favour as a lover of the arts.

It could certainly have been said with truth a few years ago, and probably could be said now, in spite of the recent rush of American buyers into the picture market, that the finest collection of Italian Masters of painting outside of Italy could be made from English galleries and English houses, and also the finest collection of Spanish Masters outside of Spain, of Flemish Masters outside the Low Countries, of French Masters outside of France. In short, one might get the finest and most complete collection representative of all the painting schools of the world from English collections.

One ungracious explanation is easy: that the English have been the rich people and have been able to buy. But a rich nation does not buy pictures without some national love and appreciation of pictures. I hesitate to write

that in these days when one hears of a *nouveau riche* commissioning a friend "to buy him £10,000 worth of pictures by those old jossers"; and in any well-regulated fashionable furniture shop you may buy with the pots and the pans and the indubitably old worm-eaten antique furniture, pictures of the right age; and even books in the proper tone of binding for your old oak book-shelves. Still, taking a view by centuries and disregarding the crazes of a season or a generation, it is fair to conclude that a nation which consistently buys pictures, and good pictures at that, has some love of and taste in painting.

The lordly young Englishmen of past generations who, "doing the grand tour," came home with examples of the great continental Masters of painting for their halls, had not the motive of a blind and vulgar obedience to a passing craze. They must have known good pictures and liked good pictures. Year by year, generation by generation, they carried on their work until English collections came to have representative examples of all the great schools of the world. The while, there was no lack of English painters of distinction, and though the

English schools of painting may not claim the same degree of achievement as English schools of prose and verse, they have done enough to rescue their country from the reproach of being careless as a nation of the art of painting. There are, let it be agreed, "Philistine" classes in England; and these "Philistines" have had more authority and opportunities of rule in England than in most European countries, a fact which has carried with it artistic disadvantages to weigh something in the balance against advantages in other directions. But it is absurd to attempt to represent England as a lost country artistically. The visitor who is interested chiefly in art will find in the various public galleries (not alone in London, but also in the provincial cities) many great examples of painting. If he chooses to carry his curiosity further he will find most of the private collections open to the inspection of any one who will take the trouble to ask courteously for permission to visit them.

In regard to music, it is probably just as easy to clear England of the charge of ignorance and want of sympathy. But I cannot undertake the task with any skill, for I know little of

the musical world, not enough even to distinguish surely in Simonetti, the famous Italian conductor of the Athanasian orchestra (the names are laboriously fictitious), the excellent Simpson of Brixton, S.W. But the evidence (I plead always for a judgment on evidence, not on the hasty impression founded on a prejudice) would seem to show that England at one time was musical enough in a sweet wholesome way, producing a music of the open-air and the green fields. Then there came the great industrial epoch, and the people turned from the fields to the factories, and dug under the soil instead of tilling its surface; and that stream of thrush-melody was choked, and there came nothing notable to take its place, with no prompting to madrigal and pastoral, with not enough of neurasthenia to produce anything notable in the music of morbidity.

But the charge against musical England is carried further. Not only does she produce nothing, but she appreciates nothing. Dumb herself, she is resolutely deaf also to the song of others. I find it difficult to believe this in view of the fact that the hall-mark of London is still sought eagerly by the singers of the world,

and is regarded as the final stamp of approval. If England were such a barbarian of the musical world as some would have us believe, why this eagerness for an English verdict of approval, an eagerness which is to be met with all over Europe, America, and Australia ?

To record concrete facts, there is a great deal that is of musical interest to be explored in England. The capital has many excellent concert halls, where all the world's music from the classics to the latest frenzies of neo-Impressionism can be heard. In the provinces, too, there are many fine musical organisations, and when the "Celtic fringe" comes to be encountered, as in Wales, there is a musical fervour to match that of the most ardent of the Latin races. So—even though opera in London is of social rather than of musical importance—the English cannot be condemned at the present day as musically careless and ignorant ; and in past times they have produced some worthy music and show signs in the present time of a revival of native music.

As to the art of the theatre, England, proud in a magnificent past, which is still the only rival in Christian times of the days of the ancient



WESTMINSTER ABBEY FROM THE END OF THE EMBANKMENT

Greek drama, can with more good content than most nations submit to the present phase which makes production and scenery and not the play "the thing." But in dramatic as in musical art it is the fashion to represent England as sunk in a Slough of Despond, whilst other nations march gloriously forward on the upper heights. I take leave to dispute the truth of that picture. It is not a Golden Age anywhere for the drama. Our time seems to be capable of very little else than going over the tailing-heaps of past workers, searching for a little grain of gold here and there, and, after finding it, beating it out thin with infinite labour to make it appear as impressive as possible. There are no great nuggets being turned up ; no one is pouring out a golden stream. But of what little pottering work there is being done, England is responsible for a fair share.

Perhaps her surviving instinct of Puritanism stands in the way of slightly increasing a small success. There are only two stories, says some one : there is the story of one man and two women, and there is the story of one woman and two men. English custom has insisted for a century or so upon a certain reserve in the treatment of any one of the infinite variations on

these two themes ; and there is a Censor to enforce some unwritten and poorly-understood Rules of the Game. Censors of the Censor say that his main rule is that you may not be "sexey" and serious, though you may go far on the path of being "sexey" and frivolous. A fairly faithful study of the London theatres has suggested to me that whatever primness there was about the censorship is rapidly breaking down, and there is not an undue amount of it nowadays.

The present (1912-13) fashion in London is for spectacle plays—in which the mounting is of at least equal importance to the play—and "atmosphere plays," the scene of which must be pitched in some unfamiliar, preferably some slightly uncouth phase of life, which is reproduced with meticulous accuracy. I suppose that Sir Herbert Tree may be accepted as the leader of theatrical London of the day : and when I sought to get an impression of theatrical London "behind the scenes," I obtained permission to watch him at work in the shaping of a big "production," *False Gods*, from the French, a philosophical treatise in the form of a play, which was to be launched upon London with the adventitious aid of impressive "production."

“No! No!! No!!! You must go mad, go mad! Think of a French Revolution—be just that! Dance, leap, shriek. Go mad!”

That was what I heard at the first dress rehearsal of *False Gods*, Sir Herbert Beer-bohm Tree speaking with gesture to match his speaking. He had been watching the rehearsal with obvious satisfaction up to that. All had gone well and smoothly. In the first stage-setting his certain eye took in the fact that there was one false god too many on the terrace of the great Egyptian house. The bulk of that god spoiled the sky and the beautiful vista of the Nile. With a brief iconoclastic phrase that god was abolished.

Then the races of Egypt took Sir Herbert Tree's attention. “Too pale, too pale! Something more of the Nile mud in your faces!” The crowd of “supers” were prompt with grease-paint to make their colour more Egyptian. But the producer was not quite satisfied, and mounting the stage took himself a stick of paint and, working on their faces like an artist at a canvas, tinted two “supers” to the proper shade of Egyptian darkness.

Having so arranged the gods and the faces

of men, Sir Herbert Tree turned to the firmament. The sky must have more light here, less light there. "It must get the burnished effect." In time, after many experiments in limelight, it does.

But those are only details, which the chief of the theatre attends to between snatches of conversation, never dropping for a moment his air, a little that of a philosopher, a little that of a Beau Nash. When, however, in the great scene where the images of the false gods are torn down, the mob on the stage tears with but little noise and no rage, Sir Herbert Tree is moved out of himself. In a moment he is on the stage with the command, "You must go mad!" and giving a workmanlike imitation of what he wants. The "supers" accordingly go mad and all is peace again, and there is assurance that the big scene will "go" as it should.

A curious study it was—the finishing touches being put on to a great London production. The final result must be such art as imitates Nature and yet creates illusion. Every detail has to be most carefully considered and revised again and again to fit harmoniously in with the whole scheme. The colour of a dress, the tint of a

face, the shape of an eye, the placing of a flower or an ornament is changed and changed again until there is the harmony which apes perfection. Above all, the lights must be schemed—a little more purple, or green, or grey, or rose-red, or yellow; a softening here, a heightening there. A thousand-and-one combinations of light are tested until the right one is hit upon to suggest mystery, joy, sorrow, dawn, evening, superstition, cruelty, as the case may be. Much of the story the audience will read so clearly on the stage on the first night is written by the lights. The greatest trouble of the producer has been to get those lights right, not only for each scene, but for each minute of the scene, for with every phase of the play the lights must change.

It seems a monstrous task to the uninitiated. But during it all the producer at work is, as a rule (there are exceptional moments when the “supers” must go mad), quiet, chatty, willing and able to show the other side of his personality as a philosophical critic of the drama, its aims, its ethics.

“Yes, I work in a large frame. . . . Problem plays would not suit my canvas. (More purple now in that evening sky.) The object of the

drama ? Of course, to be amusing and to make people happy. That does not exclude tragedy. There is pleasure in tragedy, if it is lofty and not repulsive. We arrive at the same physical result through weeping and through laughing. (Those hands *must* all be held in the same way in the invocation. Remember it is a ritual !)

Torture scenes on the stage ? No, not if they are repulsive. But there are ways and ways. You can put blood trickling down the steps of a scene to suggest tragedy, and you can put blood trickling down the steps so as to suggest nausea. That second thing must not be. There must be nothing repulsive. (Give more of a pause there. And don't go near her. She must hold the stage for fifteen seconds.)

“ Yes, I think the drama is growing in influence in England. We have a stronger drama than a decade ago. To-day the theatre is stronger in England than in any other part of the world. I say it deliberately. Stronger than in France, stronger than in America. And its influence grows. It is partly due, I think, to the decline of dogma. (Please, please, that music a little softer ; but quicker too, brighter !) The stage's influence grows as dogma declines. What

do I mean by dogma ? Well, faith of the open-your-mouth-and-shut-your-eyes brand. But the stage must not have a pose nor a preach. We must be unconsciously ethical and proud of our craft. There's not enough pride in craftsmanship these days, not enough of the artist's spirit either in the artisan or in the artiste.

“ Above all, if we are to be artistes we must be tolerant.”

Then the time had come for Sir Herbert Tree to dress as the High Priest of Egypt. The two concluding acts of *False Gods* are coming, and in those two acts Sir Herbert Tree has to take part. The rehearsal afterwards misses the stimulus of his running comment and his suave sagacities. But it is still absorbingly interesting. Five minutes of high, emotional tragedy are sandwiched between discussions of lights, of dresses, of positions. When anything is not quite right the play is stopped, and voices fall from intensity to commonplace. Midnight approaches. Here and there a super, who has not quite enough of the artist's spirit to be able to take a pride and joy in doing his super's service of standing by and waiting, yawns. But the producer hammers and hammers away like

a metal - worker fashioning a beautiful gate. With infinite multiplication of touches the production begins to take its shape.

At 1 A.M. the rehearsal is over. " Things are fairly satisfactory." It has lasted since 5 P.M. For three more days and nights the same task will be gone through, so that the " first night " may be perfect and the first-night audience may have no hint of the labour that perfection has cost.

It is all very fine ; in a good producer's hands very artistic. But is it " dramatic art " in the full sense of the word ? The question arises more insistently when the " production " is not that of a philosophical treatise in the form of a drama, which must be freely and splendidly illustrated if it is to " sell " at all, but of a Shakespeare play. Sir Herbert Tree is a great producer of Shakespeare ; and he illustrates dramas of noble passion and lofty thought with the same elaborate care as he lavishes on a play like *False Gods*, or some " patriotic spectacle " of snippets and fustian.

There is another school of " producers " in London, aiming at strangeness, perhaps a little more than at simplicity. It is, in a sense, a



WESTMINSTER AND THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

school of revolt against elaborate production. I do not think that either school is destined to save or to condemn dramatic art.

Meanwhile, the theatres in London (and in the provinces which reproduce London successes, and also bring, with the aid of their Repertory Theatres, a valuable addition to the current of dramatic life) can be always trusted to offer something amusing to all tastes, from the serious to the gay and the raffish. A very well-defined type of London theatrical entertainment is the "musical comedy," a taste for which has spread to America, and is now invading France. It grew out of French *opera-bouffe* by way of burlesque, and of the "comic opera" type which Gilbert and Sullivan made famous. "Musical comedy" has to be bright, tuneful, inconsequential, and illustrated by charming women in charming costumes. Its aid to the happy digestion of dinner is one of its chief claims to popularity, and it strives to amuse without making undue demands on the intelligence.

The explorer in the theatrical life of England must not miss the music halls—the smaller ones usually owing part of their attraction to the fact that they are the resort of people whose chief

business in life it is to be gay, the larger ones much more regardful of British Puritanism.

Yes, perhaps in reviewing the whole situation in painting, music, drama, Art is not so kind to England as Nature; or rather the Englishman does not give so much loving care to the arts as he does to his gardens and parks. Nevertheless, England is not a land altogether of Philistines.

CHAPTER XII

POLITICAL LIFE IN ENGLAND

AFTER cataloguing carefully the industries which occupy the working hours of the Englishman and the sports which amuse his leisure, there would still be left to be considered a great field of activity which can come strictly under the heading neither of work nor of amusement, though it affords much of both. That is the field of politics.

Huge amounts of time, energy, money, are expended yearly by the Englishman on politics. To some of the wealthy and leisured, political activity in some direction or another is the chief interest of life. To some of the poor and discontented, politics seems to offer a way to better things. To the middle classes a degree of political activity is dictated if not by personal predilection then by the dictates of fashion or by the ambition

to "get on" socially. There is no better way of social advancement than the way of politics. It is not only that knighthoods, orders, peerages even, reward the political worker, but that entry into social circles otherwise closed becomes possible when some mutual political interest smooths the way. Thus the ranks of those genuinely interested in political issues are recruited by a great crowd of social aspirants, sincere enough probably, but with, as their main object, the desire to parade their excellent political principles as a reason for advancement into "good society."

This aspect of political life is not peculiar to England. Wherever representative institutions exist it may be found in some degree. But in England it has gone to an extreme length. The existence of a very numerous leisured class is partly responsible, no doubt. Another explanation is that in England with political issues are inextricably involved personal and clan rivalries. The Montagues and Capulets do not brawl in the streets of London or Manchester. They fight out their rivalries on the hustings and in the field of politics. Where there are no ready-made leaders of political faction in a town or

district they soon develop; or there may grow up a joint-stock rivalry between the political clubs, in which the personal leadership becomes of minor importance but the corporate struggle for supremacy is tremendous. Then the position resembles the fierce but on the whole good-natured contests between football clubs and their supporters.

The rival political organisations, under these circumstances, seek always eagerly the man who can win or hold the seat, and their chief interest is that the party platform shall be so framed that it will be most likely to attract the "wobblers," who are not definitely and permanently bound to either party. Victory carries with it intense satisfaction. With defeat there is rarely any enduring bitterness. In politics, as in other games, the Englishman is a "good sport," and if he loses to-day hopes to win next time, or consoles himself, when he is permanently and hopelessly outnumbered, that at least he has won a "moral victory." A "moral victory" is won when you are decisively beaten, but would certainly have won on account of the excellence of your cause but that Providence was on the side of the bigger battalions.

Aside from the main party issue :

Every little boy or girl that is born alive
Is born either a little Liberal or a little Conservative.

English political activity finds expression in numberless leagues, societies, organisations, and unions to promote some special idea in politics. These usually have a nucleus of enthusiasts and a great body of followers with no very precise idea of what they want, but an impression that the league is a good thing because it has this or that personality among its office-bearers. I tried once to make a census of the political organisations of England, and gave up the task when the number passed into the hundreds without the end being in sight. Each party has several organisations to meet the needs of different types of supporters. Then each idea claims its league to advocate, and often also its league to oppose. Further, there are all sorts of leagues which aim at the abolition of something, and again there are some leagues pseudo-political, which really have no more serious purpose than afternoon tea.

But usually the purpose is serious and sincere. Else why the street meeting, which in the English climate is usually a harsh tax on the comfort of speakers and audience? My first

impression in London of one of these street meetings at first inspired in me ridicule, then a reluctant admiration. At a street corner—brilliantly lighted from a public-house on one side and a grocery store on the other—a little pulpit set up in the road: from it a man speaking vigorously, almost passionately, apparently to the idle wind, for no one is there to listen, unless indeed that horse drowsing in the shafts of a cart at the grocery store is listening, and what looks like sleepiness on its part is really quiet and intelligent appreciation. This was strange enough to arrest attention. I forgot a purpose to see from Primrose Hill the young moon rise over London on a clear night, and stopped to listen. That was the first of the audience. The speaker had announced, “We are met here to-night to ——”; but that was, it seemed at first, an unjustifiable optimism, for nobody had met; nobody seemed inclined to meet.

But the speaker, after all, knew. There was to be, later on, a meeting, and he, with a stolid courage that evoked an admiration strong enough to smother the first sense of ludicrousness, was making that meeting. To speak to a meeting which isn't, to pour out eloquence to an empty

waste of street for half an hour or so until the curious are attracted and an odd bystander swells to a group, and a group to a crowd—that surely calls for courage of the highest; it calls, too, for that stolid self-confidence and imperviousness to ridicule which seems characteristic of the Englishman when he feels that he is in the right.

But very depressing is the beginning of this street meeting. The speaker has put up his little barricade, a street pulpit of deal, which bears a placard urging “the electors to insist on a candidate who will support British work for British hands”; but at first there is neither friend to help nor enemy to fight. In a little while two supporting speakers appear with bundles of pamphlets. Three small boys, attracted by curiosity, are enlisted to distribute these among the audience (as yet non-existent). The man in the pulpit talks energetically and sensibly. There are all the essentials of a good meeting, except an audience. The horse at the street corner still drowzes. With irritating persistency a street beggar—a sturdy young chap apparently, perhaps one of the victims of the political evils that the speaker is talking of—plays a dismal tune again and again on a con-



HYDE PARK, LONDON

certina. The air is eager and nipping, and it seems hopeless to expect that any number will give up their Saturday night to stand listening at this cold street corner.

But gradually the crowd swells. There are at least 150 people listening by the time that the first speaker has concluded and makes way for another. I seek from him an explanation of this strange form of political propaganda. Is this a casual incident or is it a habit? It seems that it is a habit, the expression of the faith that is in them by a small group of enthusiasts who think they see England in danger and wish to send to the people a warning word. The meeting grows with every minute and livens up considerably. A bystander, on whom Fate has evidently not inflicted a drought, interrupts persistently, and finally accosts the speaker and puts an affectionate and unsober hand on his shoulder and wishes to help him to run the meeting; but the police interfere, and the speaker goes on pouring out facts in vigorous phrases. Now and again a wife comes into the crowd and draws away her unwilling husband; for there are Saturday night marketing duties to be done, and on them political education must wait. But

such losses in the audience are made up by gains, and the meeting goes forward to a cheerful, even an enthusiastic conclusion. It has dealt with one of the big questions of the day. But—so strong is the political habit of the English—it might have attracted almost as much attention if its object had been the advocacy of the setting up of a Jewish Republic in Jerusalem, or some amendment of the law to protect hansom cabs from motor-cab competition.

But political life is not all street-speaking. Indeed, that is generally left to the stark enthusiasts and to the faddists. When the big actors on the stage of politics take the platform, it is in a theatre or a great hall of amusement, and there is an orchestra; sometimes, too, eminent vocalists; and even occasionally also a cinematograph entertainment, to make the evening “go off well.” I recall a nicely-balanced evening at which there was a duke in the chair—a true nobleman this particular duke, but not at all an orator, and he did not attempt to speak. Then a breezy speaker filled in an hour with advocacy of “the cause”; after that music and moving pictures for an hour. For the audience the winter evening had been filled very comfort-

ably. There was something of an atmosphere of "high society," some earnest and not very dull explanation of a political issue, and some entertainment.

To make the pursuit of politics still more comfortable there are very many political clubs. Almost every electorate has its Conservative Club and its Liberal Club, to which the only qualification for membership is a sound political faith. At these clubs there are newspapers, magazines, games of all sorts, refreshments (at club prices), and occasional political discussions and lectures. Then in the capital and the big provincial towns there are clubs of a more "exclusive" type, membership of which is more or less reserved. The two biggest political clubs are the National Liberal—with a magnificent house fronting the Thames—and the Constitutional (Conservative) in Northumberland Avenue. These are the great popular headquarters for the young fighters of the two big parties. It is almost necessary to be a member of the National Liberal Club if you wish to show as an earnest Liberal. There is a popular gibe "from the other side" which gives the definition of the "complete Liberal": "I have always refrained

from intoxicating liquors ; I have married my deceased wife's sister ; none of our children have been vaccinated ; and I am a member of the National Liberal Club." The "other side," galled a little at this, has not so far responded with anything better than this definition of the "complete Tory" : "I am incurably stupid ; and a member of the Constitutional Club."

The party chiefs have their club citadels in Pall Mall, London—the Carlton on the Unionist side, the Reform on the Liberal side. Here one gets sound politics of one's own particular brand, with sound port, good dinners, and comfortable chairs. (The English "club chair," by the way, is the standard of manly comfort the wide world over. You find the English "club chair" proudly announced as a luxury in all Europe, Asia, America, Australia, and Africa ; and "club" is a word found in every civilised language.) Membership of these clubs is difficult to win, and it carries with it some claim to be considered one of the managing committee of the party. (The Reform, however, is not quite so rigidly a "party" organisation as the Carlton, which will force you to resign if your politics

do not remain sound from a Unionist point of view.)

But apart from the great well-defined political clubs there are scores of minor examples of these social-political organisations. Whenever a political "group" is formed, it finds the need of a club where it may talk over its enthusiasms at dinner. Thus when recently Lord Halsbury led a schism against the main body of opinion among the Unionist peers, a "Halsbury Club" was formed to band together in social as well as political unity those who agreed with him. Not all these clubs acquire club-houses. Sometimes they seek the hospitality of other clubs, sometimes are content to engage a private room at an hotel for their periodical dinners and discussions.

A very interesting political club in England is that secret organisation known as "the Confederacy," a very advanced and extreme Unionist body, which has a marked influence on political life, and which is proud of that testimonial of its usefulness based on the declaration of one of its opponents that it is an association of "political Jack-the-Rippers."

Who are the Confederates? The names, of

course, cannot be disclosed. It is allowed for any member to declare himself to be a Confederate if he so chooses. But few care to do so. The strictest secrecy must be maintained as to his fellow-members, and no report or record is allowed to be taken of any proceedings of the Confederacy; not even a balance-sheet is ever disclosed. There is a small inner circle of them—known as “the Allies”—who manage the finances and administer the affairs of the Confederacy generally, taking their instructions from the mass of the members, who meet monthly in a strictly-guarded room of a private club, or at the house of one of their number, from which all servants are excluded as soon as the dinner (which ushers in all meetings) is over. The aim is that no one shall be indictable in the camp of the enemy as a “Confederate” except on his own confession.

“Who are the Confederates?” cannot therefore be answered with any list of names. As a class, they represent the young bloods of the Tariff Reform Party, the forward spirits who believe that in politics one should be strenuous as well as politic. They have raised among themselves a big fighting fund. They have

at their command a list of speakers (who, however, are not always allowed to know under what prompting they are sent out into the political firing line), and they command by various means a great newspaper influence.

The professed object of secrecy is to secure the greatest possible efficiency. It is the Unknown that is terrible. A "Jack-the-Ripper" who openly declared himself would have nothing like the power of one working in the dark. These political "Jack-the-Rippers" recognise that fact, and do not in the least object to the savage epithet which they earn by their secrecy.

A meeting of the Confederacy is always precluded by a dinner. Thus, to the outer world, and to the servants of the club or of the private house which is chosen as a meeting-place, it is just a gathering of men to dine together. After dinner, with the port and the coffee and the cigars, the doors being barred against the intrusion of servants, business begins. Every member is entrusted with the duty of observing some phase of the political fight and reporting thereon. The chances in various electorates are discussed. Funds are voted, when that is necessary, to assist candidates "on the right

side." Flights of orators are despatched to points where they are needed. The newspaper side of the campaign is canvassed. Executive action on all the points raised is left to the three "Allies."

There is no Liberal analogue—so far as I know—to the Confederacy. But one might exist without any one knowing of it except the actual members. Certainly there are secret groups in all the political parties. Sometimes the secrecy is dictated by real motives of expediency. Sometimes it is just a device to give zest to a jaded political palate, and is comparable with the elaborate make-believe of children.

Women are not banished from the political life of England. Almost every party organisation has a separate branch for women, and the influence of these women's organisations is very great. Indeed, some believe that the drawing-room is more powerful than the platform in English public life. But women do not confine their efforts to the drawing-room. They invade the platform also and are sometimes very effective speakers indeed. Lately the agitation for giving women the Parliamentary vote has brought a fresh incursion of feminine workers

into the political field, and some of them have shown a remarkable originality in educational work. To raise false alarms of fire so that the Fire Brigades may have useless trouble, to destroy letters in postal pillar-boxes with corrosives, to break windows, and to inflict mild assaults on public men—these are some of the recent methods of political life in England introduced by the agitators for the enfranchisement of women.

It is curious to note with what relative patience such political methods are received. If any one attacked the people's letters for some motive not political, the public indignation would know no bounds, and the sternest punishment would be insisted upon. But "politics" explains most things, condones most things. The English have a phrase, "politically speaking," which in effect means "not really." They have two great games, cricket and politics. In cricket you must observe all the rules of fair play with most scrupulous nicety. In politics there is practically but one rule—to stick to your side. To say that something is "not cricket" is to signify that it is within the law, but transgresses some delicate tradition of justice, and therefore is reprehensible.

To say that something is “ politics ” means that it must be condoned, unfair though it may seem, because it has a political motive.

In this chat about the political life of England I have sought to be impartial and “ non-party ” ; and that is, by the way, the one really serious political misdeed. Every one must have a label of some sort, or otherwise be accounted somewhat in the category of an unregistered dog.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEFENCE OF ENGLAND

To keep this England secure, what are the means? A glance at that question at once makes it necessary to tell of Britain rather than of England. There is no English Army, no English Navy. In each case it is a British force, and in the case of the Navy it is being rapidly developed into an Imperial force representing the strength not merely of England and of Britain, but also of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the other Dominions. Yet no picture of England could pass without some reference to the Navy, which is the supreme maritime force of the world, and the Army, which, though it is a very thin line these days compared with the great continental masses, is probably prepared to uphold in the future the great traditions of the past. And Navy and Army, though not wholly English, are in the

main representative of the senior partner in the British firm.

The problem of the defence of England is a great deal complicated by the fact that the British power has spread itself so much over the globe. Outside of Europe it possesses nearly one half of North America, a great share of the East Indies, the West Indies, and the islands of the Pacific, the whole of Australia and New Zealand, the best parts of Africa and of Asia. In past days there have been some astonishing cases of a wide range of power from a small focus : the Roman Empire, the Spanish Empire, the Portuguese Empire, the Mohammedan Empire, for examples. But in no case was the comparison between the mother-country and the actual stretch of real dominion so astonishing as in the case of Britain and her Empire. In most of those cases, too, the Empire was short-lived, and soon broke up into its constituent parts. But the British Empire remains incredibly vast, and seemingly permanent.

The position is that the parent country of that Empire has to face a far greater task than the securing of her own safety. History shows that part of the price of Empire to be paid by Britain

is a mutual jealousy and hostility between her and the next greatest Power in Europe. British foreign policy, more or less consciously, has had to be always founded on that basis. She has in the past fought down Spain, Holland, France. After the Napoleonic Era, when Russia seemed to be the paramount power of Europe, she inevitably set herself to thwarting and checking Russia. When Russian power lessened and Germany became the first Power of Europe, she likewise stepped into the place of the Power which is doomed to be in antagonism to Great Britain. Were German might to fade away, the nation that took Germany's place as the most powerful in Europe would also take her place as the feared rival. The British Empire has taken up so much of the limited room "in the sun" that it must tempt to attack an aspiring Power; and it must face with a nervous dread the growing strength of the paramount Power for the time being in Europe.

In the old struggles to maintain the British Empire, we relied successfully on a policy of "splendid isolation." Without making permanent alliances we held aloof and when a struggle came threw in our weight with one set of Powers

or the other and usually secured thus a victory. For many reasons that policy is not the "official" policy of England to-day, though it still has many warm advocates. But, as under that policy for a century a supreme Navy was considered to be necessary for Britain, so to-day that need still survives, and the Navy is the senior defence force of the country. The reliance on naval strength is so complete that the Army is kept to very small dimensions, comparatively speaking, and none of the great cities are fortified. The naval ports have fortifications, but one looks in vain for fortresses around London, Birmingham, and Manchester. England is committed to float or sink on the Navy. As Campbell proudly put it:

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore
When the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return.

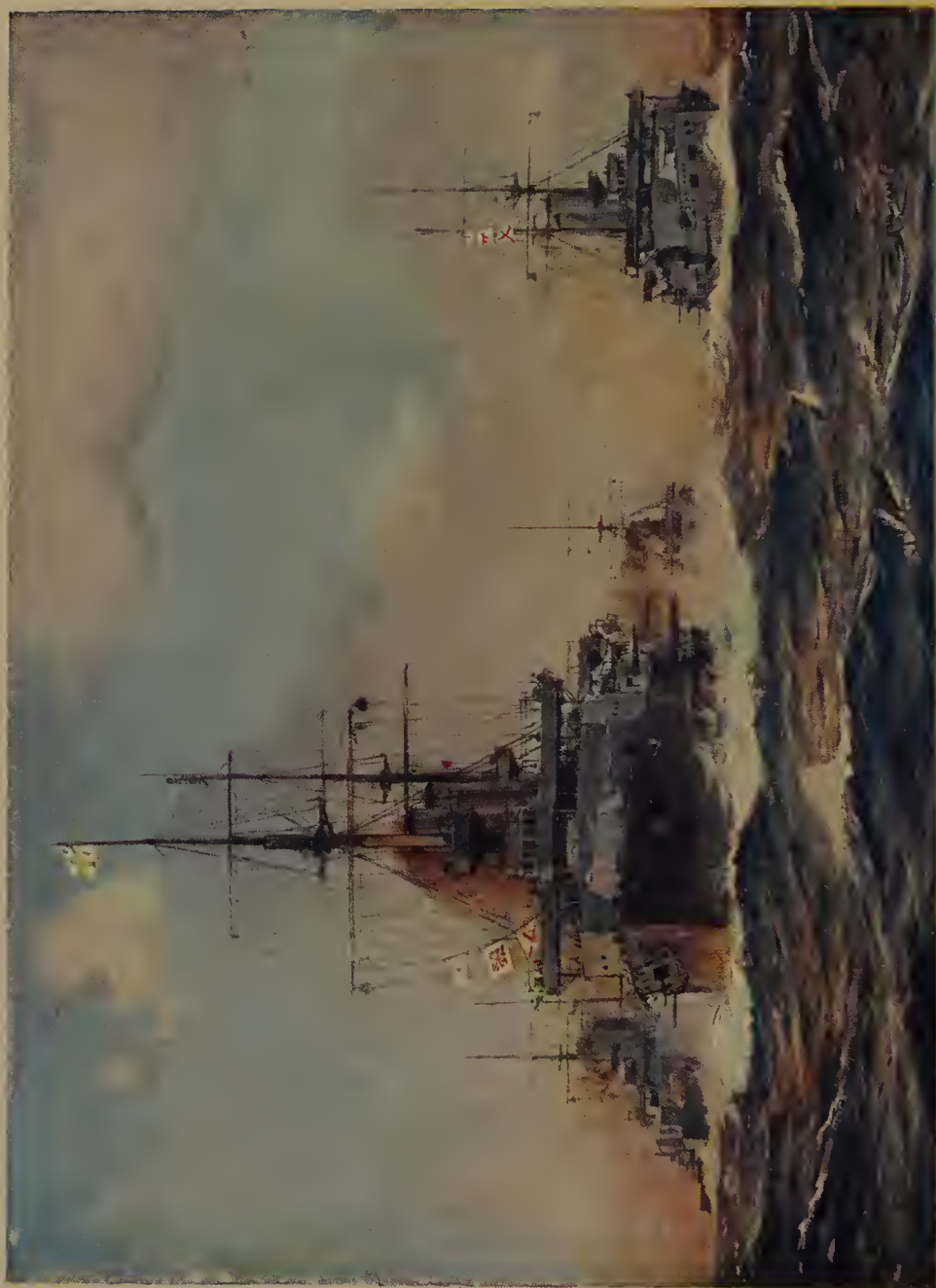
This Navy, which has such a great responsibility, has its present headquarters at Portsmouth and Plymouth on the south coast—great naval ports since the days of the Armada and the Napoleonic wars, and very handy in case of war with Spain or France, and in case of expeditions to the Mediterranean, the West Indies, or the Pacific. But its striking force is now rapidly being based on new headquarters facing the North Sea, such as Rosyth in Scotland.

My first view of the British Fleet in the mass was at the great review held for the Imperial Press Conference delegates in June 1909. It singled that day out from life as great events of pride or of dread mark days. Out from grey and reverend London, settling to the tasks and pleasures of day with quiet confidence, past the villages and fields of the beautiful English country-side smiling in sweet security, we journeyed to Portsmouth to see the ramparts of the Empire. The very train, gliding with unruffled speed, seemed to have a sense of sure stability as it ate up the miles between the chief citadel of our race and its guardian walls.

The sea was dull and leaden, reflecting a dull and leaden sky, as we steamed out past the old

Victory—significant reminder of great danger of the past greatly overcome—to the Solent, lined like a busy street with great dull, leaden-hued ships. It seemed fitting so, more fitting to the spectacle than a bright heaven and dancing water; for the Fleet had little suggestion of gaiety as it stretched line upon line out to the horizon where sea and sky met. It told rather of a grim resolve to meet menace with menace. So dominant was the note of sternness that the colours of the bright bunting flaunted by the ships faded out of the eye, and one only saw the vast bulk of brooding power.

There was an Armada of one hundred, and again almost half a hundred vessels, ranging from the great fortress of the *Dreadnought* type to the viperish destroyers, bringing danger with their speed, and the uncanny submarines, stealing under the water, invisible to the ships they threaten except for a little staff, slender as the antenna of an insect, serving as an eye to the brain below, for offence or defence. Yet practically all those 144 vessels were the fruit of the previous ten years' work; and there was melancholy proof in the row of big ships sulking in the far background—apparently stern, vigorous,



BATTLESHIPS MANOEUVRING

and great in strength, but excluded from this parade as useless—of how quickly Time, bringing new inventions, destroys the usefulness of the sea-fighting machine. How vast the task of maintaining a power so hard to bring to life, so quick to decline! The monstrous strength of the elephant comes only of slow growth; once attained, it is slow to decay and fall. But the unit of sea-power seems almost shorter of life than of gestation.

Past the serried lines of destroyers, we were carried to cross the stern of the *Dreadnought*, noting best thus its wide bulk, and turned down a long lane of water lined with battleships. With happy symbolism, the right edge of sea-guardians represented the nations of the Empire—*Africa*, the *Commonwealth*, *New Zealand*, the *Dominion*, *Hindustan*, *Hibernia*, *Britannia*, with *King Edward VII.* at their head. It was good to be represented, if only by a name, in such a Fleet. Then to the submarines, swimming like a school of killer-whales on the surface of the sea; then again to the big cruisers to see the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, the *Indomitable*, proudly flaunting their justly insolent names; then to note, with a throb of grateful memory, a new *Temeraire*

of deadliest might riding beside a ship bearing Nelson's name ; and, finally, to be received in welcome on the giant deck of the *Dreadnought*, noting the linked lines of bluejackets, the oldest element of British naval supremacy, and the spider-webs of the wireless telegraphs, the newest sign of British resolve to keep that supremacy.

Before the *Dreadnought* there paraded then the submarines, some showing their decks awash, others betraying their route only by their periscopes, yet others diving to disappear completely. Next, a herd of black destroyers rushed by with vindictive speed, discharging unloaded torpedoes at the *Dreadnought*, whose sides were protected by nets. Each torpedo found the mark ; many, their driving force far from expended, searched and spluttered at the nets, foaming up the water, spitting out fire and smoke. It was significant of the perfect confidence in the Navy that no one of the onlookers crowding the sides of the *Dreadnought*, within a few feet of the nets, flinched. Yet had one of those torpedoes by mistake been loaded, it would have sprinkled death far around. But no one thought of danger. It was "the Navy," which does not often make mistakes.

That was my first view of the British Navy.

I had many opportunities afterwards of studying its ships, its men, its system. I saw, on a day of grey fog blurring the features of England and hiding its defending sea, such a day as might make this island fortress open to attack, the *Neptune* (an improvement even on the *Dreadnought*) take the water. This, the latest addition to the ramparts of Empire, seemed as if eager to get into her element, anxious to hurry to the fighting line. The first steps towards letting her to the sea were taken some while before the appointed time, and the *Neptune* glided so swiftly down the ways that she was afloat before the moment announced for her naming. The water fled back from the onrush of her vast bulk, then, returning, took the *Neptune* to its bosom, and she floated easily and confidently. The launching could not have testified better to that perfection of calculation and arrangement which Britain expects of her naval men. One moment the ship pushed a monstrous form high up on to the land, the flowers bedecking her prow accentuating rather than relieving the impression of uncouthness; the next moment she was swimming bravely on the water, a mere hulk of a ship as yet, but in all her lines telling clearly

of vast power and swiftness in defence or in attack.

The simple religious service with which the launching was prefaced came harmoniously into the spirit of the occasion. There was no bluster of threat, no echo of the fierce war hymns of the Old Testament ; but a humble, and yet confident invocation to the Supreme Power for guardianship and safety. It might have been taken as a declaration that this handiwork of man, terrible engine of battle as it was, had for its aim and end no desire of rapine or aggression, but that of peace and conservation.

Since the *Neptune* I have seen many other warships launched, including the Australian vessels, which are to help the Empire to hold the Pacific marches ; and the Armada seems ever to grow, and yet ever to be thought insufficient for its grave responsibility.

The influence of the Navy is very great on English public life. It draws away for its service a considerable proportion of the best young manhood of the country, and subjects them to a special training and discipline. The habit of thought and of action that they acquire thus gives a tinge to the whole life of England,

for, after naval training, these men come back to civil life. In all ranks of life ex-naval men may be found doing good service, from governors down to grooms. An unfortunate fact is that there is a pronounced leakage of British naval men to foreign service, attracted by the pay and the chances of promotion.

Linked up with the Navy is the British Mercantile Marine, the best of the *personnel* of which is organised into a naval reserve. At the back of both are the fishing fleets of England, which were the first nurseries of the Navy, and are still a valuable school for sea-craft. Calculating together the Navy, the Mercantile Marine, and the fishing fleets, a large percentage of England has its home, more or less constantly, on the sea; that sea which serves England "in the office of a wall, or as a moat defensive to a house," and which established thus its claim on her blood.

The Army of Britain has had for a century all its work to do abroad, and it might without exaggeration be said that its chief station now is in India. But, setting on one side for the moment the garrisons of India, Egypt, and other parts of the Empire which are peopled by subject

ances (the free Dominions are not garrisoned, but defend their own territories with their own troops; there is one temporary exception, South Africa, but the British garrison will leave that station shortly), the Regular Army in England has its chief camp at Aldershot on the road between London and Portsmouth. It is organised on an expeditionary basis, and is always spoken of as an expeditionary force. The idea is that, in case of war, it should go abroad to India or Egypt if an attack were threatened there, to the European continent if that were the theatre of operations. Meanwhile the supremacy of the Navy would ensure that no enemy should be able to land a large army in England. The defence of English territory against such a raiding force as might elude the Navy is entrusted to the "Territorial troops"—enlisted on a volunteer basis.

Perhaps the English Army system will be best made clear by tracing it from its beginnings with the schoolboy age. In the first place, it has to be noted that there is no compulsory military service in England. Until quite recently it was possible to recruit for the militia (though not for the Regular Army) by a ballot,

i.e. by the drawing of a lot to determine a certain number of recruits who were forced to join whether they liked it or not (this system is still in force in the Channel Islands). Now there is absolutely no compulsion in England to undertake any form of military service. It is not even compulsory that schoolboys should undertake cadet drill. The English boy can altogether neglect any training for the defence of his country if that is his wish and the wish of his parents. In the majority of cases he takes full advantage of that freedom. If, however, he has some stirring of a desire to equip himself for defence, he may join the Boy Scouts—a non-military, but a disciplined organisation recently set afoot by General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who was a very prominent figure during the last big war that Britain had. If the English boy is of a more marked martial inclination he can, whilst at school, usually join a cadet organisation or the Officer's Training Corps,—a body of cadets recruited from the higher schools. If it is intended that he should seek a career in the army as an officer, he will, as a very young boy, be sent to a preparatory school, and go from that to a military college, and from there, on passing

his examinations, go into the commissioned ranks of the Army.

So much for the boys. The adults may join the Territorial Force, a civilian army which makes slight demands on their leisure and does not interfere with them following civilian associations; or they may join the Regular Army. In every other great country of the world (except the United States) a certain proportion of adult men have to join the Regular Army for a term whether they wish to or not; in some countries almost every able-bodied man is thus passed through the military organisation. But in England the Army is recruited on a voluntary basis. It is sought to get men by offers of good pay and good conditions of service. Naturally this makes the British Army a far more expensive affair, regiment for regiment, than any other army of the world (again except the United States). Its friends claim, however, that this extra cost is compensated for by extra quality, and that the willing recruit will be a more "willing" fighter than any conscript soldier.

Though the English are a naval rather than a military nation, their battlefield record is a particularly proud one. The English character



CHANGING THE GUARD, ST. JAMES'S PALACE

in battle shows the stubborn, dogged traits of the people from whom the soldiers are drawn ; and since in any British army there is always a great admixture of Irish and Scottish soldiers to give dash and *elan*, the net result usually proves to be an ideal fighting force.

To turn to less serious things, the British Regular is a very decorative personage. It has cost a good deal of money to turn him out, and the military authorities insist that he should show that money's worth. This is partly from pride in the force, partly from a desire to encourage recruiting for the Army by the parading in the streets of these well-set-up, gorgeously uniformed men. The regiments kept in London barracks are "show" regiments, and a very fine note of pageantry they bring to the old grey city. The ceremony of changing the guard at the palaces draws a crowd of spectators daily ; and he is an unlucky wight indeed who does not find often his glimpse of London park or road brightened suddenly by the passage of a troop of cavalry, plumes nodding, cuirasses gleaming, spirited horses pannading.

The populace love the soldiers. Yet there is no abatement of the old English jealousy against

encroachments by standing armies. The military power is kept strictly subservient to the civil power, as a hundred and one regulations and customs constantly remind. The civilian people are resolved that their defenders shall never become aggressors against their liberties. To the visitor from the European continent, where the soldier is supreme, the position of the military force in England seems strange, even undignified. But it is a jealously guarded survival of the days of old strifes, when there was real danger of a king using the army to destroy the liberties of the common people. There is little or no reason for the survival now ; but the sentiment of it is good.

With that I may well conclude these notes on England ; for, after the green fields and the dear homes of England, the strongest trait of the country's character is the tender guardianship of old forms and symbols and customs. England does not lag behind in the work of present-day modern civilisation. But as she goes forward she takes the Past affectionately along with her.

INDEX

Alcuin, 47
 Aldershot, 198
 Ampthill Park, 36
 Angles, 17
 Anglo-Saxon, the, 15, 24
 Anglo-Saxon victory, 18
 Army, the, 187
 Arnold, Matthew, 107, 131
 Arthur, Prince, 129, 130
 Arthurian legend, 19
 Arts in England, the, 155
 Avebury temple, 10

 Balsham, Hugh de, 51
 Bank Holiday, 80
 Bath, 102, 110, 111, 136
 Beau Nash, 111
 Becket, Thomas à, 112, 129
 Beverley, John of, 47
 Bird-Cage Walk, 104
 Boadicea, 110
 Bodichon, Madame, 52
 Bodleian Library, 55
 Bourne End, 123
 Boy Scouts, 88, 199
 Bristol, 112
 British climate, 9
 British Empire, the, 2, 188, 189
 British Mercantile Marine, 197
 British oysters, 14
 Briton, ancient, 6, 11
 Brittany, 5
 Browning, 38

Buckingham Palace, 79
 Buckinghamshire, 135

 Caedmon, 46
 Caesar, Julius, 6, 18, 102, 111, 121
 "Caesar's camps," 14
 Cambridge, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 136
 Cambridge University, 48
 Campbell, 190
 Canterbury, 112, 129, 131, 135
 Carausius, 13, 15
 Casserterrides, the, 8
 Caxton, 19
 "Celtic fringe," 11, 160
 Changing the guard, 201
 Charles I., 69, 73
 Charles II., 56
 Chelsea, 121
 Chester, 25, 111
 Cities of England, the, 101
 Clough, Miss Anne J., 52
 Cornwall, 5, 9, 11, 21, 37
 "Coronation" stone, the, 133
 Coventry Patmore, 38
 Cricket, 94, 185
 Cromwell, 135

 Dane, the, 15, 17
 Davies, Miss Emily, 52
 Defence of England, the, 187
 Devon, 11, 37

- Devonshire Moors, 28
 Disraeli, 135
 Dobell, 116
 Dover, 112
 Drake, Sir Francis, 5, 112
Dreadnought, the, 193, 194, 195
 Durham, 109, 141
 Durham, William of, 55

 East End, the, 153
 Education, English system of, 43
 Educational Institutions in England, 45
 Edward I., 50
 Edward II., 51
 Ely, 47
 England at play, 81
 English agriculture, 70, 72
 English Channel, 1
 English kindliness, 137
 English manor house, an, 33, 78
 English public service, 75
 English spring, 117
 English work, solidness and honesty of, 74
 Englishman, æsthetic, 31
 Englishman, the, as an exile, 34
 Englishman's love of nature, 31
 Ethelred, 54
 Eton, 63, 122

 Fen lands, 73
 Flamborough Head, 42
 Fleet Street, 103, 127
 Flying Meetings, 98
 Football, 94
 Forest of Dean, 73
 Fox-hunting, 96
 Fredeswide, 54

 Gauls, the, 5, 6
 Giraldus Cambrensis, 130
 Girton College, 52
 "Girton Girl," the, 47
 Glastonbury, 7, 130, 131, 135
 "Grand tour," the, 157

 Greenwich, 41, 58, 121
 Grey, the poet, 78
 Guinevere, 131
 Gulf Stream, the, 1, 9, 12, 37

 Hampden, 135
 Hampstead, 139
 Hampstead Heath, 81
 Hampton Court, 121, 122
 Harrow, 63
 Hecataeus, 9
 Hedges, the, 30
 Henry I., 47
 Henry VIII., 121, 130
 Home-management, 79
 Horse Guards, the, 104,
 Horse-racing, 95
 House of Commons, 65, 69
 House of Lords, 65, 69
 Houses of Parliament, 69, 102
 Hugolina, Dame, 47
 Hyde Park, 107
 Hyperboreans, Isle of the, 9

 "Ipswich Man," the, 10

 Jutes, 17

 Kensington Gardens, 107
 Kent, 17, 42, 116
 Kew Gardens, 35, 120
 King Arthur, 21, 112, 130

 Land's End, 37
 Landscape, human interest in, 4
 Leonidas, 4
 Life of the lowly, the, 145
 London, 101, 102, 116, 136
 London coster, the, 83
 London parks, 105
 "Lord Mayor's Day," 87, 88, 89, 90

 Malory, Sir Thomas, 21
 Marches of Wales, 11
 Marsh village, the, 7

- May Day, 90, 91, 92
 May-pole, the, 91
 Medland Hall, 147, 148
 Merton, Walter de, 51
 Midlands, the, 109, 139
 Milton, John, 58, 135
 "Mr. Speaker," 65
 Music, English, 158
 Music halls, the, 169
 "Musical Comedy," 169

 Navy, influence of the, 196
 Navy, the, 187, 198
 Nelson's Monument, 102
 Neolithic Age, 10
 New Forest, the, 42, 73
 Newnham College, 52
 "Newnham Girl," the, 47
 Norfolk Broads, 28
 Norman, the, 15, 22
 Norman architecture, 22
 Norman Conquest, 54
 Norsemen, 17
 Northampton Camp, 6

 Olympic Games, 100
 Oxford, 41, 46, 53, 55, 59, 60,
 62, 116, 136

 Pageants, 24
 Pall Mall, 103
 "Park-like" England, 29
 Peacock, Thomas Love, 17
 Pepys, 56, 60, 113
 Peterborough, 47
 "Philistinism" in England, 89
 Pictures, English collections of,
 156
 Plague Year, the, 56
 Plymouth, 37, 112, 191
 Political activity, English, 174
 Political Clubs, 179, 181
 Political life in England, 171
 Political organisations, 173
 Population, the poorer, 137
 Portsmouth, 191
 "Predominant partner," 24

 Pre-Roman Briton, 7
 Pre-Roman relics, 8

 Richmond, 120
 Richmond Hill, 120
 Rivers of England, the, 114
 Rochester, 112
 Roman culture, 23
 Roman invasion, 13
 Roman military camps, 14
 Roman roads, 14
 "Rowton House," a, 147
 Rugby, 63

 St. Albans, 109, 110, 139
 St. Augustine, 112, 129
 St. Joseph of Arimathea, 131
 St. Paul's, 103, 135
 Salisbury, 113
 Saxons, 17
 School of York, 46
 Scotland, regalia of, 133
 Scotland Yard, 76
 Shakespeare, 90, 109, 168
 Southampton, 129
 Southend, 84
 Spanish Armada, 5
 "Sport," 93
 Stoke Court, 78
 Stonehenge, 10
 Stourbridge Fair, 49
 Strand, the, 102
 Stratford-on-Avon, 109
 Street meetings, 174
 "Suffragettes," 67
 Sun worship, 9
 Surrey Downs, the, 28
 Sussex Marshes, 38

 Terra Alba, 1
 Territorial Force, the, 200
 Thames, the, 12, 103, 117, 120,
 123
 Thames Embankment, 149
 Thames Valley, the, 28, 37, 41,
 116, 122
 Tower of London, 105

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tree, Sir Herbert, 162 | William of Normandy, 5 |
| Trees, regard for in England,
36 | William the Conqueror, 73 |
| Triskele, the, 7 | Winchester, 63, 111 |
| | Windsor, 122 |
| Venerable Bede, the, 46 | Winkelried, Arnold, 4 |
| | Wolsey, Lord, 121 |
| | Worcester, 129, 131, 135 |
| | Worcestershire, 135 |
| | Wren, Matthew, 51 |
| | Wren, Sir Christopher, 51, 56 |
| | Wykeham, William of, 55 |
| | |
| | York, 46, 131 |
| | Yorkshire, 17, 116 |
| | Yorkshire Hills, the, 38 |
| | Yorkshire Wolds, the, 41 |

Watling Street, 111
 Westminster, 70, 135
 Westminster Abbey, 103, 131
 132, 135
 Westminster Hall, 69
 White Cliffs, 5
 Whiteway, Sir Thomas, 63
 Wilfrid of York, 47
 William of Durham, 55

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